THE FAR AND FURRY NORTH

By REV. A. C. GARRIOCH

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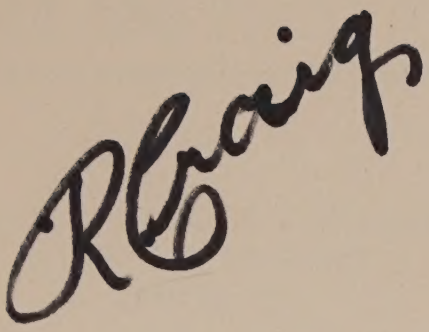

The Far and Furry North

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THE FAR AND FURRY NORTH

A STORY OF LIFE AND LOVE AND TRAVEL
IN THE DAYS OF THE HUDSON'S
BAY COMPANY

By

REV. A. C. GARRIOCH

MANITOBA, CANADA
1925

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PREFACE

When the North-West came under the rule of Canada in 1870, the writer had reached the age of manhood, and soon after entered upon missionary work in that part of the North-West, which, in those days, was spoken of by the people of the Red River Settlement as "the North."

In the review of his life which exceeds three-fourths of a century, the writer regards the years 1874 to 1891, which were spent in the North, as distinctly pleasant and interesting, because they were spent amid natural surroundings, and among people who, whether Indian, White or Half-White, treated him from the start as if he were more friend than stranger.

His recollections of the period referred to are distinct, and are given in this book in the form of a romance, always however, with actual facts clearly in sight, and often literally described.

It may be a mistake for one who during his long day has endeavoured to adhere to the literal truth, when evening comes, to depart from that rule by writing a work of fiction; but this seemed the more kindly way of writing of contemporaries, some of whom are good friends who have not yet crossed the divide, about whom interesting incidents may be related without offence, by the use of fictitious names and other harmless devices.

A. C. G.

FOREWORD

My life-long friend, Mr. Garrioch, has written another book—"The Far and Furry North." After reading it in manuscript I have great pleasure in contributing a Foreword for it.

The book may be described as an historical novel, a type of story perhaps not as popular in modern days as it once was. However, the author has succeeded to a very marked degree in sustaining interest in the tales he tells from start to finish. As in his former book, "First Furrows," there is a quaintness about his style and also about his descriptions of life in those Northern regions which cannot fail to arrest the attention of the reader. But, quite apart from the merits of the story itself, with the many little social incidents which he weaves into it, the book to my mind is quite an important contribution to the history of a period in the story of North-West Canada which was alike unique in character and had a charm and romance all its own. That period has passed forever, for with the advance of modern conditions, it can never come back. The author, having lived in the midst of it all, is well qualified to preserve an accurate portrayal of the life and to recapture the very atmosphere of those pioneer days. This he has done very well indeed. The manner of living, the modes of travel in winter and in summer, the hunting scenes of large and small game, the methods of trading and commerce and the early efforts to evangelize the native tribes, are all most vividly depicted. Those were the days of the regime of the Hudson's Bay Company, and I observe that the business ethics and the paternal treatment of the Indians and others by that Honourable Company of Adventurers, which have at times been grossly misrepresented, are worthily vindicated by the author, who for years was an eye-witness of what he records.

I warmly commend Mr. Garrioch's book as a reliable representation of "the far and furry north" in the days that are now past.

S. P. Rupert's Land.

Bishop's Court,
Winnipeg, Canada.

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CHAPTER ONE

Courtship Complications

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century there was a flourishing school in St. John's Parish, Red River Settlement, which was named the McCallum Academy in honour of its scholarly principal, the Rev. John McCallum. It was renowned in its day for strict discipline, and for the remarkable success of many of the young men and young women who received their education there. These were mostly sons and daughters of Hudson's Bay officers, some of whom were retired and settled on the banks of the Red River, while others were still in active service in various parts of the interior.

Among the most successful graduates from this school was William Findlay, whose father was one of the most influential Chief Factors in the Company's service.

When the time came that young Findlay had to select his calling in life, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps by entering the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, giving as his reason for doing so, that it appealed to him as "the state of life in which he was called" in that he had been born and bred in it, and had acquired the art of driving dogs, besides a knowledge of the Cree and Ojibeway languages.

During Mr. Findlay's first four years in the service he was stationed at Upper Fort Garry, where he served as clerk in the saleshop and in the outfitting department. At the end of that period he had attained his full growth,

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being then only an inch under six feet; and he looked what he was—a strong and active man. He was also a man of fine presence, and adding to this an affable manner and kindly disposition, he became immensely popular not only with his brother officers, but with the people of the Settlement as well.

He showed consideration for all, whether Indian or White, and never allowed his attention to be so engrossed by a person of high degree, as to make him fail in due regard for one in a lowly position. Genuine sympathy, a pleasant smile and a genial laugh were natural to him. It was no trouble to keep the golden rule in dealing with him, because one could always feel that in the "come back" he was almost sure to go one better.

Among the other clerks who entered the Company's service the same year as Findlay was John Thomson, a young Scotsman from the Old Country. He, too, served the first years of his apprenticeship at Fort Garry, so that he and Mr. Findlay saw much of each other; and the acquaintance thus formed grew into a firm and life-long friendship. In qualities of head and heart the two young gentlemen were not unlike; but there the resemblance ceased, that is, the setting for these qualities was very defective in the case of Mr. Thomson. Physically he was not more than passable; and he had a laughable laugh and a nervous peculiarity, consequently he appeared to disadvantage among people generally, and became diffident and unduly sensitive.

Let it be known that the position of clerk in the Company's service served as a passport to the best society in the Red River Settlement, for a clerk who behaved himself was almost sure to be a Chief Factor some day, a

position of very great honour, almost equal to that of the Hudson's Bay Governor or even the Protestant Bishop of the Hudson's Bay Territories. More than that the aforenamed great honour carried with it a comfortable little fortune. Therefore, as may be supposed, the young and fair sex of the Red River Settlement were disposed to regard Mr. Findlay and Mr. Thomson as belonging to the rising generation, and showed their perfect willingness to rise in their company.

One of the places where our two heroes had a chance to discover their affinities was at the "Balls," which were an important feature in the social life of the community. These balls or dances were of such general interest that they furnished interesting topics of conversation and subjects of lively and sometimes loving correspondence for a considerable time afterwards; and occasionally there would be a sort of aftermath and then some clergyman would feel called upon to voice his sentiments publicly with respect to dancing in general, while the members of his flock, however they might respect his opinions, would feel genuinely sorry for him, while they wondered which of the commandments "which are called moral" they had violated when they got up and thoroughly and conscientiously enjoyed the jolly old Red River Jig. Of the clergy in general it is, however, only fair to add that they made a prudent distinction between moderation and excess, both in the matter of dancing and in the use of ardent spirits. The trouble in regard to the latter is that we are not all as scared of them as we ought to be. And some there are who can't be satisfied until the cup which inebriates, fully charged with the said spirits, has several times been emptied, and what wonder if the "spirits which he hath taken unto himself" makes a man too *ardent* for his own good or for that of his friends.

As the world grows better, which we expect it will, people are bound to drink less, and they will do so *of their own free will*; but as long as the sun and moon endure, healthy men and women and children will find pleasure in dancing, neither will there be lacking the auspices, if old traditions of proper chaperonage are maintained, which will serve as guardian angels to the innocent. And whatever may happen to dances which call for bodily contact or for gentle and graceful motion, there is no doubt that, according to the law of the survival of the fittest, Red River Jig and Highland Fling and kindred dances will continue to flourish. For one thing, they are in line with the times which with ever increasing insistence demand rapidity of motion. They are also well adapted as exercises in the now popular science of physical culture. There are not many joints or muscles in the human body which are not directly or indirectly affected by a well executed Red River Jig, for it calls for every possible combination of steps which an intellectual biped is capable of inventing and practising without tumbling over. It afforded to ambitious young men in those early days just the opportunity that was wanted of showing off some new steps—"capers" they were called—which they had discovered. And while they did so the other guests usually took a breathing spell, and with the air of connoisseurs appraised the merits of the various capers so as to arrive at a well-founded opinion as to who was the best dancer in the Red River Settlement.

Besides these balls there were small affairs—apparently impromptu—where friends and neighbours would meet as if by accident, and, before they parted were very liable to dance. One of the homes at which this not infrequently occurred, and at which Mr. Findlay and Mr. Thomson were always welcome guests, was that of Mr.

Archibald Blain, a Scotsman who had risen to the much desired position of Chief Factor in the Hudson's Bay Company's service, and at the age of sixty had retired.

Mr. Blain and his comely wife were in themselves sufficiently interesting to furnish ample pretence for the frequent visits of our friendly disposed clerks; but when it is stated that the Blains had several lovely daughters who were in the full flush of lovely young maidenhood, and only lately returned from finishing their education, it will be readily believed that the said young ladies were entitled to a fair share of the credit for the frequency of the clerks' visits.

At the time the two clerks were entering upon their apprenticeship with the Company the Misses Blain were receiving flattering attention from several others of the young gentry of the Settlement. Opinions differed among their friends as to which was the most beautiful; but there was only one opinion as to which was the cleverest and most fascinating, that distinction being cheerfully accorded to Miss Nellie, even if her greatest admirers did have to admit that she had a few freckles, and that she was not striking either in height or form.

It was when engaged in animated conversation that one best realized her superiority, for then those with whom she conversed could sense the nature of the soul that looked at them through its windows, while upon her countenance there was written an expression of kindness and intelligence which was well supported both by her actions and her words. She sowed plenteously of the seeds of loving kindness, but she did it all so quietly, that what the world in general knew about it, they learned chiefly through the spontaneous affection and esteem of those with whom she had to do.

Shortly after Mr. Findlay and Mr. Thomson entered the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, two young Canadians, Messrs. Buckingham and Coldwell, established the first newspaper in the Red River Settlement—the "Nor'-Wester." The information supplied through its columns to the people in Eastern Canada resulted in a few adventurous souls coming out to see the land of promise for themselves. Among those who did so, and who, after seeing were pleased to remain, were James Simpson and Alfred Mills, both of whom soon found openings for their respective lines of business. Mr. Mills had a grown-up family, and his eldest daughter, Miss Vernie Mills, was a well educated and very attractive young lady. She was more genteel and exclusive than the young ladies of the Settlement. As will appear later on, she had something to do in "shaping the ends" of some of the characters in this story. The other recent arrival, Mr. Simpson, was a young man and unmarried. One did not need to be a keen observer to notice that he was no common-place individual. It could be felt in his personal magnetism and seen in his splendid physique, and none were quicker to feel and see than the young ladies of the Settlement, including Miss Mills and Miss Blain.

The five young people so far mentioned in our story met from time to time at the balls and at the residence of Mr. Blain, and the acquaintance thus formed grew into friendship, and the friendship grew into love, and they all intended to marry, whatever any of them might have said to the contrary. And there was no just cause or impediment why they should not marry so far as they or their friends could tell. But there was an impediment. Be it now declared there was an impediment both legal and mathematical. Each within the circle of five having no conception of such a circle,

selected his or her affinity within the circle, and did so, of course, without consulting the other four! The result? A complication. For the law of all Christian countries demands that the rule in Eden as to assortment and numbers must prevail, and five divided by two only goes twice and one must be left out in the cold.

It is easy for two people while they are being gently wafted towards the state of matrimony, or during the honeymoon, to endorse the fond belief that marriages are made in heaven, although a little later they may feel that heaven is to be exonerated from all responsibility for their having come together.

In the case of the union of the respective pairs that came out of the circle of five, it can be said that their life-long happy character favoured the idea that some marriages at any rate have their inception in heaven. Well it would be for humanity if all who enter upon that holy estate would do so with the conviction that it was so with them, and would bravely live up to that conviction right up to the divide, beyond which these unions will be on a higher plane, and the sweetness and beauty of earth will take on the sweetness and beauty of heaven, and, perfected thus, will continue forever.

Possibly these young people did not look so far ahead, and were for the present satisfied to work out the reasonable faith that "heaven helps those who help themselves." Unfortunately, however, in the endeavour to enact this faith, some of them at first tried to help themselves to the wrong party, which caused confusion not simply because of the odd person who would be left over, but also because an ordinary man, or for that reason an extraordinary one, can love two women honestly and truly at the same time, and a woman can do precisely the same thing

manward. The ethereal notion of an affinity who so absorbs one's love that there is not enough left to satisfy a house-cat may be all very well in poetry and romance, but it does not work in actual life. It certainly did not do so in our little circle of five; for both Mr. Findlay and Mr. Simpson fell in love—or if you prefer it—rose in love, with both Miss Blain and Miss Mills, who severally reciprocated by falling in love with both the gentlemen named, while Mr. Thomson—poor Mr. Thomson!—unknown to anyone but himself was desperately in love with Nellie Blain. It must be admitted that it was a remarkable situation; but it had come about without any intent or premeditation—a number of young people had met together from time to time in a social way, and their mutual admiration had led to results which they had never anticipated.

The situation called for relief, and the initiative obviously lay with the gentlemen. Strange to say, the waking up to a sense of duty—privilege it might be called—was simultaneous to an extent. Mr. Simpson was the most expeditious, and being the one gentleman of the three who was in a position to marry at any time, he decided there was no time better than the present, and furthermore, for reasons best known to himself, he decided to marry Miss Mills. Accordingly, one fine evening in June he proposed or "popped the question," as the Settlement people would say, and was accepted.

When Mr. Simpson left Miss Mills after receiving her gratifying answer, that young lady walked in her queenly fashion to the window of her room which faced the river, and looking for a long time with unseeing eyes at the opposite bank, she whispered to herself while she wiped the tears from her lovely face, "I am so glad that he will have sweet Nellie Blain to make him happy."

Of the three young people, Miss Nellie Blain was the first to hear of this engagement, and although not very surprised nor yet very sorrowful, as might be expected, she was more perturbed than Miss Mills, forasmuch as the latter had her "bird in hand," whereas Miss Blain's chances were now cut down as far as she knew at the time, to a "bird in the bush." So she did feel pensive, and desired to be alone, or as one might say—in the company of the birds in the bush, in order that she might calmly take in the altered situation. To this end she quietly slipped out from the house early in the afternoon, and set out on her favourite walk, which was the path on the survey line marking the western boundary of her father's lot. This led her alternately through aspen groves and little prairies luxuriantly covered with grass and flowers. Following this path for about a mile, she came to a particularly inviting spot, where she had before rested in the shade, and she did so now. There she drank in the beauty of this little corner of the world which for the time being was all her own. The flowers were with her still, and their scent and shape and colour and shade were fine as ever; the birds sang no less happily; the bees worked no less steadily; the butterflies fluttered no less airily, and the aspen leaves still whispered soothingly and unceasingly according to their wont.

Let it be here understood that her concern was not solely on account of her loss of a man, who, to the best of her knowledge, could be replaced by another just as good. Her concern was as much due to the moral aspects of the question, for she was an honest and conscientious soul, thanks to a wholesome religious training both at home and at school, and she wanted to make sure now that she had been waked up as to whether in the dual character of the love-making in which she had been implicated she had

not been guilty of inordinate affection; so in this secluded corner of the world, where the aspen leaves whispered suggestively of the sanctity of a temple, she took herself to task—but her life was in harmony with "all things bright and beautiful"; and having satisfied herself on this point, she rose to her feet smiling. There had been nothing wrong except that she and her friends had been excessively friendly, and their friendship had ripened into love, and twin-love at that. However, as one man and one woman had made their selection, the twin phase was simplified, and there was no reason why there should not be another engagement in the near future, and so while the birds sang, and the bees hummed and the leaves whispered, she wended her way homeward, singing in a subdued voice as she walked along.

As it chanced it was only the evening before this that Mr. Findlay and Mr. Thomson, sitting in the clerks' quarters after having had their tea, were enjoying their pipes and talking about their friends, and they mentioned especially the Blains and Mr. Simpson and Miss Mills, quite unaware that only the day before the two last named had become engaged; and not being mind readers, each was also unaware of what the other was fully resolved to do the very next day, that is to say, Mr. Findlay did not know that Mr. Thomson would propose to Miss Blain, and Mr. Thomson did not know that Mr. Findlay intended to propose to Miss Mills, so they spoke in general terms about their business expectations, while each fondly hoped that within the next twenty-four hours he would have something definite to confide about his matrimonial affairs.

They both admitted that their ages would permit of their going some years longer before marrying; and that

in any case it would be some years before they could secure the consent of their superior officers.

"However," said Mr. Findlay, "I do not suppose it matters much to the Company whether a clerk of theirs is engaged or not so long as there is a thousand miles or so between the said clerk and his intended."

"Pretty safe distance," said Mr. Thomson, laughing gulpingly, which seemed to be the only way he could laugh, and for which reason he did not laugh oftener than he was obliged to. Then he added, "I should think that when the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company induced a clerk to go out for service in the lonely regions of the North, it might prefer his being engaged, so that being able to sing 'The Girl I Left Behind Me,' he would the more resignedly endure his years of banishment." Then, being a communicative individual, he confided to his friend that he had a great admiration for Miss Blain, whom he considered a most wonderful girl, and the "most charming girl of a charming bunch of sisters."

Mr. Findlay perfectly understood that his friend was manœuvering for a clear field, and assured him that he had it so far as he was concerned; then he enthusiastically agreed with him as to Miss Blain being a "wonderful girl"; and he furthermore added, "I believe that Fred Simpson also is of that opinion; and the man who wants to get ahead of that magnetic customer does not want to lose any time." Then the friends wished each other good-night and proceeded to get the beauty sleep they would need to enable them to pass successfully through the ordeal of the coming day.

Luck, at the start, seemed to be with Mr. Thomson, for his orders next day from the officer in charge were to

take the officer's horse and buggy, and convey some light articles to the Lower Fort, and at the same time to make an examination of a certain account. "Fortune favours the bold," said Mr. Thomson to himself as he turned his smiling face in the direction whither he would go.

Behold him then, at about eight a.m., setting out on his momentous journey. With forethought and honesty which did himself and his nationality credit, he attended to the Company's business first; but in addition to his honesty there was a conviction under his hat and beneath his waistcoat that after he had had his interview with Miss Blain, whatever the results might be, he was not likely to care about any more business for the rest of the day. For these reasons the Company's business came first. And now he is approaching the point where the western survey line of Mr. Blain's lot intersected the public highway. Miss Nellie was also approaching that point after having gone through the searching self examination under the whispering leaves of an aspen grove as already described, and she and Mr. Thomson reached the point of intersection at precisely the same moment.

"Holloa!" said the girl.

"Well! Well! Isn't this fortunate?" said the man, to which she replied, "I hope so!"

In an instant he sprung to the ground and warmly shook her extended hand. He then offered her a seat in the buggy, which she accepted, and then he proposed that they should go for a little turn before driving her home. To this she assented, stipulating, however, that it should be indeed only a "little turn."

In the course of enquiries about their mutual friends, Miss Blain was surprised to learn that Mr. Thomson had

not heard of the engagement of Miss Mills to Mr. Simpson. The news was a surprise, and his comments made on the spur of the moment seemed to the fair listener by his side, to contain a quintuple reference in which she herself was not ignored. He said, "I am not personally concerned; but it may make a difference to Mr. Findlay, for, unless I am mistaken, he was greatly interested in Miss Mills, and I feel pretty sure that had he only moved a little faster, it is the now lucky man who would have been left in the cold."

"I am inclined to agree with you, Mr. Thomson; but it may be that Mr. Findlay has some other lady in view. One can never tell what you gentlemen are up to."

Mr. Thompson noticed that this last remark was accompanied by a deepening of colour; but just as he opened his mouth to inform her of what a certain gentleman was up to with respect to herself, she opened her pretty little mouth and complimented him on his fine prospects in the Company's service, which she supposed must be pretty good in that he was already enjoying the use of a Chief Factor's horse and buggy.

The said horse was a tractable creature of considerable experience in the varying moods of the humans who occupied the seat behind him, and, sensing in the relaxed reins permission to be guided for a time by his own desires, he presently dropped his nose to the ground and commenced to enjoy the succulent grass which grew by the way.

In the meantime, Mr. Thomson, defying his physical disabilities, made connection with Miss Blain's playful remark about his prospects. "My prospects," he said, "are all right, and whatever good things the future may have in store for me, I would very much like to share

with you. Nellie, I have come here today in the hope that you will make me the happiest man on earth by consenting to become my wife."

Very much startled, she exclaimed, "Oh! Oh! Mr. Thomson! You and I have always been such good friends. Please let it go at that, if you would make me happy!"

"I would make you happy, but in the better way. Nellie, I have loved you since the first hour that we met, and for a long time I fought against it because I could see that you were sought after by worthier than I; but the struggle against my feelings, as you see, has been a failure. Yield to my honest desire if you can. I have to leave soon for the North. Can you not say the word which would make life out there very pleasant for me, and would encourage me to efforts which might lead to my being worthier of you than I feel myself to be at the present?"

Kind hearted Nellie Blain was deeply moved, and with tears in her eyes and in her voice, too, she put up a hand to her throat as if in distress, and replied, "Oh, Mr. Thomson, I am *so* sorry! because I may be somewhat to blame, although I cannot remember having ever said anything that was misleading. And you were always so good and quiet that I had no suspicion of anything like this."

With no intention of acting the hero, poor Thomson just at this juncture showed that he was one, for he said, "Don't blame yourself, Miss Blain. You could not help being an angel any more than I could help being an ass, and if ever-r-r, that is, when ever-r-r I get over this, perhaps I shall be none the worse for having known and loved one so good and kind as you."

Need it be said, that the conversation during the rest of the drive as well as during Mr. Thomson's brief call at Mr. Blain's was rather perfunctory, and the lone driver was glad to be enshrouded in darkness long before he got back to Fort Garry.

The chief hero of this story, Mr. Findlay, devoted the greater part of the day to business, and early in the afternoon started for his decisive interview with Miss Mills, whom he knew to be visiting with the Lewins some distance westward from Fort Garry. He owned a beautiful horse, and when he had mounted this animal, which was tastefully caparisoned with a bead-work saddle-cloth, upon which was placed a saddle similarly ornamented, and with a coloured woollen tassel dangling from each of its four corners, he presented a fine manly appearance which anyone endowed with an æsthetic taste could not fail to admire.

Allowing his horse to amble along, he came to what was a common and interesting sight in those days—a large herd of cattle grazing by the wayside—and stopping for a moment to watch them, he noticed that there was in the breath of evening a suspicion of crushed strawberries, as well as the grass and flowers at which the bovines were greedily munching. And there was also music in the air. The prairie plover poising stationary overhead, uttered its little scream, "o-week-w-e-e-e"; another plover announced its presence by giving out its name repeatedly, "tildee, tildee, tildee"; a grey-bird contributed its cricket-like song, and a meadow lark perched on a snake fence sang most sweetly of all, tempting Mr. Findlay to purse up his lips and join in its song as his contribution to the concert of the birds; all of which goes to show that besides loving two women almost equally well, he had

still left, love enough and to spare, for the other beauties of creation.

As good fortune would have it, before Mr. Findlay reached the lane leading to Mr. Lewin's residence, he met that gentleman himself driving in a buggy in the direction of the Fort. Being old friends, they stopped for a chat, in the course of which Mr. Findlay learned of the engagement of Miss Mills to Mr. Simpson.

Were this a sensational novel instead of a story written with a reasonable regard for truth, it would be in order to state here, that on learning the foregoing news, Mr. Findlay made a desperate but unavailing effort to conceal his extreme agitation. Probably Mr. Lewin, who was a tease, was watching him with a keen eye for some display of feeling; but Mr. Findlay's cool and cheerful manner gave away no secret. He actually contrived to laugh and say, "Well, in this case, the expected has happened."

"No," said Mr. Lewin. "What I expected as a man who still feels a pride in the old Company and the old blood, was, that you would have stepped in and cut out that red-headed Canuck, and what makes me mad is that I know you could have done it."

"Thank you! But perhaps as a former Hudson's Bay officer you are not unacquainted with the law, 'Never allow your private feelings to interfere with your public duty.'"

"O! You have got on to that old Hudson's Bay saw already, have you?" And the two laughed, wished each other good-evening, and parted.

Once left to himself, Mr. Findlay followed the highway only a little farther, and then resolved to circle homeward

by the prairie while he thought over the strange thing that had happened unto him.

And this is what he thought: "How fortunate! Saved by the skin of my teeth from painful humiliation. And I suppose that I should be glad that Miss Mills has been saved from the temptation of accepting me, or the necessity of rejecting me. At any rate, I am lucky in having this joke all to myself; but I must be careful in future not to love so effusively and ambiguously."

Just then a wolf, of the kind now called a coyote, but at that time a togany, sprang up from a hollow and raced away in the direction he was going, and his horse, showing an eagerness to follow, he gave it the rein and went in pursuit, as a means of diverting his thoughts from a none too pleasant subject. The togany made for a bush about a mile away, and by the time it got under cover there were only a few feet between its tail and the horse's front hoofs. The sun had set by this time and as he went onward amid the gathering shades of night, there suddenly issued from a bluff that he was passing, the lusty call of a whip-poor-will, causing him to say mentally to the songster, "Desist! Surely Will has been whipped enough for one day."

Mr. Findlay and Mr. Thomson returned from their equally unsuccessful ventures within a few minutes of each other, and sat down to tea together. These sensible young men did not reject their food because they had been rejected—they ate it. Their example is recommended to anyone who might find himself in a similar situation, and may be tempted to act as if the end of all things were at hand. These practical young men remembered that whatever they might have to do with in the future, for the time being theirs were bodies terrestrial, and

they did not so much as have recourse to spirituous relief, although the famous Hudson's Bay rum was easy of access. Instead of that they comforted themselves with venison steak and fried onions, Red River bannock and strawberries and cream.

Naturally, after that they felt much better, and tilting back their chairs, were enjoying their smoke as usual, when the woman who cooked for the unmarried clerks came in to clear away the dishes. Finding out by enquiry that she had picked the strawberries herself, they thanked her and made her happy by telling her that she treated them as if she were their mother.

Left to themselves they discussed the day's proceedings. Mr. Thomson was of the communicative sort who always feel the happier for having unburdened their minds to a faithful friend, and he lost no time in giving Mr. Findlay a full account of his proposal to Miss Blain, and of the feeling manner in which she had turned down his offer, finishing off with a severe stricture on his own unintelligence in having supposed that she would accept him.

Notwithstanding Mr. Findlay's sympathetic nature, and the good reason he had for being particularly sympathetic that day, he failed to be reciprocally confidential. However, he helped his friend to preserve his self-respect by telling him, "You are just as good a man as you were before, and that's pretty good; and, another thing, remember that there are at least five hundred girls in the Red River Settlement who would be precious glad to get the chance which you gave Miss Blain today. Think of that, me-boy, and forget her."

"Forget her! Yes, Will, in one sense, but in the better sense, never! A man should be the better and happier

for having loved so good a woman, even though she may not have been able to requite his love with anything more than her friendship."

"There spoke the man and the philosopher," said Mr. Findlay; then he changed the subject, telling of his ride that evening, of his meeting with Mr. Lewin and of having learned from him of the engagement of Miss Mills to Mr. Simpson.

After a brief discussion of that subject, Mr. Findlay gave a vivid description of his race after the togany, saying he had entered on the chase chiefly to please his horse, which seemed anxious to show him what he could do. And he did not forget the whip-poor-will and its usual cruel advice. Then the two righted their chairs, and after shaking the ashes from their pipes on to the ash tray, they placed them on the mantel-piece, and wishing each other good-night, retired to their respective rooms.

CHAPTER TWO

The Journey Northward

It was nearing the end of July when Mr. Findlay and Mr. Thomson left for the interior along with a brigade of three boats in charge of Mr. George Stait, a senior clerk of the service, who after a year's furlough in Scotland was returning to the Athabasca district.

The boats used on this voyage were of the regular style and size of Hudson's Bay boat used all through the country, and were known as York boats. Its carrying capacity was five tons, and it called for a crew of from eight to ten men, which included the steersman or guide who was perched above the sternsheets, and the bowsman who pulled the oar next the bow. The boats on this voyage had full cargoes of provisions and other merchandise.

Besides the three gentlemen mentioned, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, Mr. Charles Snow, was taking passage to the MacKenzie River district. He was one of the first missionaries to engage in evangelistic work in those distant regions in connection with the Anglican Church.

It may be stated to the everlasting credit of the Hudson's Bay Company, that it was closely associated with the introduction of Protestant missionary work in Rupert's Land, having paid wholly or in part the salary of the first missionary, Rev. John West, who came out under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society in 1820, and held the position of chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, as did also at least two other missionaries

who succeeded him, viz., Rev. David Jones, who reached Rupert's Land in 1823, and Rev. Wm. Cochrane, who came out in 1825. And as late as the period of which we write, the Company continued to give missionaries free passage on their boats, including a place at the officers' mess if it could be conveniently arranged.

Thomas Link was guide for the brigade, and as such it was according to custom that he and Mr. Stait should occupy the same boat; for the head officer and head steersman or guide were regarded by the Company as conjointly responsible for the safety of the boats and contents, and it was desirable that they should be together for purposes of consultation.

The sun had been shining for about two hours over the future site of Winnipeg, when the Hudson's Bay officers stationed at Fort Garry passed through the east gate, accompanying the travellers to the boats moored along the bank of the Assiniboine a few yards from its junction with the Red.

On the occasion of a brigade setting out for the North the dominant feeling could not be otherwise than one of sadness, for some were leaving behind them parents or wife and children, and others their sweethearts; and the separations were sometimes for months or years, and, possibly for life. Then the road was long and rough. Among uncertainties was the food supply, and among things inevitable, cold and loneliness. These voyageurs were noisy enough once they got under way, and as usual mixed in gaiety and laughter with their toils; but they had the intuitive grace to keep rather quiet until the last kisses had been given and the general handshaking was over. Then they took their places at the oars and bravely shouted, "Good-bye! Good-bye!" while those on land as

bravely shouted, "Bon voyage! Bon voyage!" The flow of the Assiniboine, aided with a few strokes of the oars, soon brought the boats amidstream in the Red River; and then both wind and current being favourable, oars were set aside, sails were made ready, and at the word "Hoist!" they were raised full height and full stretch in just twelve seconds. Then a calm and restful expression came over the faces of all as they settled into place, and congratulated each other on the pleasant beginning of their long voyage.

The bowsman in Mr. Stait's boat was Mr. George Kidd, son of a St. Andrew's settler. Young Kidd received the practical education which was given in the parish schools of the Red River Settlement, and left the one at St. Andrew's with the highest honours it was capable of bestowing upon him—the reputation of being a good and lively boy and as clever as the best of them. He was tall, well built and strong; in fact, so strong that boating was easy work for him, and being fond, like many others in his day, of roughing it in the open, he had made one or two long voyages in the Company's boats by way of a pleasurable outing. The Findlays and Kidds were near neighbours, and Wm. Findlay of this story and George Kidd had grown to be great friends. It was partly due to this friendship that the two young men were now sailing northward on the same boat. Kidd had entered into a five years' contract with the Company, stipulating that he was to be given the opportunity, subject to the approval of the District Officer, of qualifying under Mr. Findlay for a more important position than that of bowsman.

The Company cheerfully entered into this agreement, knowing from experience that anyone who was naturally

and otherwise so endowed that he could help to keep their employees cheerful and contented, was a valuable acquisition to their service. This Mr. Kidd was fitted to be both by nature and by art, for he was witty and of a fun-loving nature. He was also musical, had a fine tenor voice, knew many songs and could handle a violin with any man in the Settlement. He was offered the position of cook for the officers, and readily accepted it, all parties knowing full well that officers' privileges could easily be tacked on to the position, making it a connecting link between *Le Bourgeois* and the rank and file.

As the boats approached St. John's Collegiate School, Mr. Findlay referred to it as the starting point and centre of missionary and educational work in the country, and Mr. Stait remarked that it looked as if Bishop Anderson and his assistant, Rev. Thomas Cochrane, with their easy-going methods, were turning out as good men as those who graduated under the stricter discipline of Rev. John McCallum. "I believe you are right," said Mr. Findlay. "The career of a good many promising birch trees was perhaps needlessly cut short to enable Mr. McCallum to carry out his disciplinary methods, yet, strange to say, I have never met an old boy who was feeling sore over the recollection of castigations received; so, after all, perhaps the birch wasn't wasted."

He then spoke to Kidd, asking him, "What is that story, George, that you have about the Bishop and the church caretaker?"

"This is the story, and it is perfectly true: Our churchkeeper is a good old man who likes to give honour to whom honour is due, and being informed that it was customary to say 'My Lord' to a Bishop, he held himself in readiness; but when the good Bishop appeared at the

church door the old gentleman got rattled and gave him rather more honour than he was entitled to, saying, 'Good Lord, my morning.' "

"Now, George, tell us about the trip you took with his Lordship, when you were his dog-driver."

"Bishop Anderson," said Kidd, "is a very good man, but as innocent as a child, and any fellow who is at all cute can pull the wool over his eyes. When I was assistant to his Lordship by taking him out on a missionary journey with my dog-team, I felt rather awkward at first; but I broke myself in to the proper style of address by mentally addressing an imaginary Bishop over and over again a great many times. Then there was another difficulty. My train consisted of only three dogs, and I felt that four dogs at least would be needed to haul a Bishop, so I was forced to buy another, and the man from whom I bought it was a fearful swearer. He was honest, however, and said to me, 'There ain't no better dog in the whole Settlement than Tooroo, but he won't suit on this trip because of the bad way I have trained him.'

"Now, although swearing is not among my failings, after a few moments' reflection I decided to buy that dog. I did so, and changed its name to Dan, which was as near a cuss word as I dared go, and whenever it shirked and I yelled out 'Dan you!' you should just have seen it stretch out! Thus did I fool Tooroo without hurting his Lordship's feelings."

As the boats sailed along, other points of interest were pointed out, chiefly for the benefit of Mr. Snow; also several anecdotes were told of one or another of the settlers whose places were being passed. Of one it was told that on a certain occasion he was giving his friends a feast, and after grace had been said, thus addressed

them: "Now then, gentlemen, let me give you the advice St. Paul gave to his son Timothy—'Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.' "

For the convenience of some of the voyageurs, it had been arranged that the brigade would stop for a short time at St. Andrew's Church. The buildings here consisted of a fine stone church, a large parsonage and a school-house, and as the travellers climbed the bank and viewed the buildings standing on the green sward and nestling cosily against a background of aspen trees, the call of the northern wilds was for a time hushed to silence.

Archdeacon Abraham Cowley was the clergyman in charge, and he met and invited them to the rectory. The stop there was just long enough to give the men time to make tea for dinner, which was to be taken sailing; and also to give others of them an opportunity to take leave of their friends. When the tea had been made, the Venerable Archdeacon and his visitors were noticed coming from the rectory, and all exchanges of a business, social or sentimental character were at once cut short by an order from Link, shouted in Cree—"*Ahao, poosi! poosi!*" the equivalent to the English "All aboard!" At that shout, every one did *poosi* or get aboard, except Mr. Findlay, who had arranged with Mr. Stait to leave the brigade at this point, and to rejoin it at night or in the morning, at a camping place agreed upon, near the Parish Church of St. Peter's. He had had his horse sent to this point, so as to enable him to spend some hours with his mother and sisters, and to finish off with a visit to the Blains.

That afternoon Mr. Findlay met many of the neighbours at his mother's place, and they, as well as people whom he met on the road and at the Stone Fort, generally

speaking, remarked, "Sorry you are going away; we shall miss you." And he as generally answered that he also was sorry over the parting and that he would miss them.

While this was going on, Mr. and Mrs. Blain were approaching the aforenamed Fort in a buggy, and reached there a few minutes after the brigade had put in to "boil the kettle." The expression "boil the kettle" is a colloquialism used all through this country to denote the boiling of water for the purpose of making tea—that greatest beverage on earth for cheering and warming cold and weary travellers.

This chance meeting with the Blains suited Mr. Thomson very well, as it afforded the opportunity of bidding them farewell without the necessity of visiting them at their home. And they, likely knowing full well why he should prefer it so, accepted his apologies and did not unduly press the invitation that both he and Mr. Findlay should spend the evening with them. In expressing his regrets at being unable to comply, Mr. Thomson said, "I thank you both most sincerely for your kind expressions, and, believe me, my life in the 'Great Lone Land' will be made a good deal happier because of my being able to look back to many happy hours spent in your happy home; but this time, our mutual friend, Will Findlay, while acting for himself, will no doubt serve as a proxy for me."

Mr. Snow having been informed on the way down that Mr. Blain had been for some years in charge of a Hudson's Bay post in the remote North, and that he was therefore well acquainted with the Eskimo and Tukudh tribes, he availed himself of this opportunity to obtain

Mr. Blain's views as to the prospects of their evangelization, and was glad to hear him say that they were both of a teachable spirit, and that he considered the Tukudh especially, the most intelligent and teachable tribe in the whole North country.

Mr. and Mrs. Blain had not been home many minutes when Mr. Findlay arrived on the expected visit, and received the usual all-round hearty welcome, especially from Mary, the youngest sister, who perhaps divined what would be pleasing to her eldest sister. Mary and the servant girl had that afternoon picked a gallon of strawberries, and on the strength of such a feat she made bold to say to Mr. Findlay in the Irish brogue which she often affected, "You shtay here me bhoy, it's meself that's goin' to give ya a faste of strawberries an' crame, agin ya are lost an' is found any more." Mrs. Blain, whose motherly heart enabled her to twig the hint in Mary's invitation, followed it up promptly with a pressing invitation to Mr. Findlay to stay for the night. This invitation he felt constrained to decline with thanks, as he did not care to risk delaying the brigade in the morning, and he had made arrangements with a young man to take him to camp that night with horse and buggy.

Mr. Findlay, being only just a man, it is quite possible the recollection of that feast of the unsurpassable delicacy, strawberries and cream, had something to do ever afterwards with the readiness of his thoughts to revert to the happy hours spent in the congenial society of these good friends; and if anything more was wanting it was supplied by Mr. Blain, who, after the feast was over, came out with the acceptable remark, and a very common one indeed in those days—"Now then, for a good smoke."

The proposed good smoke was enjoyed in front of the house, whither Mr. Findlay followed his host. Sitting there on rustic chairs placed on the self-planted lawn of knot-grass, they lit their pipes and conversed about life in the North.

They were quite agreed that ennui was the bane of existence in an isolated out-post, and Mr. Findlay asked his friend what he had found to be the most successful way of combating the demon when he was in the North.

"When I came out to this country and learned that *Kuskeyihten*—which, I suppose, is the Cree equivalent for ennui or 'thinking long'—was one of the evils to be guarded against in an out-post, it started me thinking wisely. And I was wisely warned by experienced men in the service to guard against the serious menace to the health of both mind and body which is bound to assail the Hudson's Bay officer during the long intervals of too little to do which occur in a lone out-post, and of which the result may be that the man called *Ookimao*—master—by the Indians, may fail to be master of himself. I have heard you say that in entering the Company's service you were treading in your father's footsteps. Keep on! The example of such men as your late father, Mr. Donald McTavish, Mr. Alexander Christie and others, can be safely followed.

"As for the methods adopted by me for overcoming that fiend, *Kuskeyihten*, I may say that I always spent the twenty-four hours systematically, seeking to exercise myself aright in religious, mental and physical duties. Then I had two fads which helped me out very considerably. These were sketching and mathematics, in one or other of which I could become so completely absorbed that, barring temperature, it would not have mattered

much to me had I been leaning against the north pole or sitting astride the equator."

Just then Mrs. Blain appeared on the scene and was informed by her husband that he had been telling Mr. Findlay of how he had been saved from *Kuskeyihten* when in the North, by making a fad of the solution of mathematical problems. She replied, "Well Archie, we'll take your word for it, but you did not spend much time in solving mathematical problems after I came out there. Did you?" To this he replied, "Well, you see, my dear, from that time onward you kept me busy solving domestic problems." Thereupon she made a pretence of giving her lord a slap, which he smilingly received with open hand.

Just then the sound of the piano was heard, and Mrs. Blain informed Mr. Findlay that the girls had planned to sing some of his favourite songs to cheer him on the way. On entering the sitting-room they found the entire household assembled there, including the hired man and the servant girl. Everyone joined heartily in the choruses of the songs which were sung, and last of all, at Mrs. Blain's suggestion, they sang:

"O God of Bethel by whose hand
Thy people still are fed."

By the time this hymn had been sung, night was coming on, and through the open window there entered the sweet smell of wild roses mingled with that of sweet peas and the night-blooming stock.

Amid all this sweetness, it came natural to Mr. Findlay to give his arm to Nellie Blain, saying he would like her to pick him two or three of those sweet peas to

take with him to the North as a souvenir of this last visit. As the pair moved towards the door Mary said, "Shur-r-re Nellie. Swate William and swate peas will go well together." Then William and Nellie moved out into the gloaming, and got in the garden what they wanted—each other all to themselves. As the bouquet was being made, bats flew overhead in their erratic fashion, and the fireflies lit their lamps, and then a bird perched itself on the fence and cried out again, "Whip-poor-will! Whip-poor-will!"

Much to their credit, it can be said that the remembrance of the duplex character of the love-making in which they had recently been engaged, made them shun protestations of love on the present occasion. Nevertheless, each knowing what the other knew, and feeling what the other felt, what happened in the garden was much the same as if they "plighted their troth either to other, and declared the same by the giving and receiving of a ring." Indeed, so firmly did they believe that their destiny was to be man and wife some day, that they intuitively joined hands and indulged in a kiss—only one, and their first at that—and considering that, as far as they knew, it would be five years before they would get a chance for another, their self-restraint was remarkable and greatly to be commended. After arranging to write to each other by every packet, which at that time meant four times in a year, they re-entered the house arm in arm, as they had left it, and immediately good-byes were said and Mr. Findlay took his departure.

The next morning at dawn the wind, which had subsided during the night, commenced to blow afresh, and Link, finding that it was still south, kindled a large fire and then shouted aloud, *"Reveillez! Vent derriere!*—

Wake up! It's a fair wind!" Immediately a dozen men, each with a small copper kettle or frying-pan, were hurrying to make tea or fry bacon, while as many more were striking tents and rolling up bedding; and just twelve minutes after the guide had shouted out the order to rise, everything had been bundled into the boats, and while the now uncovered kettles were sending up their steaming columns, and the fragrant bacon was scenting the morning air, the voyageurs sat down to breakfast, congratulating themselves that wind and current were still combined in carrying them on their way.

Early in the forenoon the brigade put in at Willow Island, where tea was made and bacon fried, if possible, even more expeditiously than in the morning. By this time the wind was very strong, and before striking out into the open in the direction of Horse Island, which is forty miles from the mouth of the Saskatchewan, Link consulted Mr. Stait and also got the opinions of the other steersmen, and of Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd, both of whom had several times sailed across the lake in boats carrying full cargo as in the present instance. No one spoke lightly of the undertaking, and no one said that it was actually dangerous; but all agreed that it was a splendid wind and so the bows were pointed in the direction of Horse Island. Then, for the next six hours, whether or not the situation was serious, everyone acted as though it was, particularly when a wave would break against the low-lying gunwales and splash into the boat, freely sprinkling the faces of the travellers. Mr. Snow and Mr. Thomson both thought that the waves on Lake Winnipeg were higher than those on the Atlantic, which impression they may have received from the fact that the waves of the latter were safely passed, whereas they were still *in medias res* in regard to the former.

After what seemed to be hours without end the wind at length began to abate, and it did so more rapidly than it had risen. Then Mr. Kidd remarked that it was about time somebody laughed, and he set them an example.

Before sunset the wind had so subsided that the crews had to take to the oars. They pulled with might and main; but even so the light was beginning to fail when they caught the first glimpse of Horse Island still some miles away. As the heavens had become overcast with clouds, Link very soon had to bring into use a sort of supernatural sixth sense with which some of these ancient Hudson's Bay mariners seemed to be gifted. Without land-mark or sky-mark he steered on to where he would go. Whether he went straight or not, who can say? At any rate, he got there, and enabled the others to do so also, by setting birch bark ablaze immediately he had landed.

When the travellers were gathered before the camp-fire Link was asked how he had managed to make port in the complete darkness. He declared that he could not explain, except that he kept on saying to himself, " 'It's right there, right there, right there.' And sure enough, you see, it was."

"It was quite a nautical achievement," remarked Mr. Thomson. "Or was it a catical one?"

"Yes, it was decidedly lynxical," added Mr. Kidd.

On this night Mr. Snow commenced a custom to which he faithfully adhered to the end of his life. The custom was that when travelling with a brigade, he invited the Protestants, or as many as would come, to join him in or at his tent in a short religious service with expository remarks, and a few collects from the Book of Common Prayer.

On this occasion all were present, including a few Roman Catholics. Probably they all felt that having made the long stretch together in safety, it was only fitting that together they should make acknowledgment of thankfulness to their Strong Deliverer. After such a day as they had experienced, there was a beautiful fitness in the words of the hymn, "Abide With Me." Take for instance, the line, "Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies"; and in the selection of the 107th psalm, in which reference is made to the men who go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters, and see the wonders of the Lord. In his exposition Mr. Snow said, "We are making life's voyage together. We are making for the same port, and although darkness sometimes comes over us and we become storm-tossed pilgrims of the night, only let us believe that He is still near, 'Who plants His footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm.' And He will stand by us until the morning breaks and the shadows flee away."

It took all of the next two days to reach Grand Rapids and to transport boats and cargoes to the head of the rapids. At this post there was a rather tedious wait of some days for the brigade from York Factory, during which interval the officer in charge, Mr. Barlow, extended hospitality to the three officers from the Settlement and also to Mr. Snow and Mr. Kidd.

The inevitable delay at this point Mr. Snow turned to good account by studying the Cree language and daily visiting at a camp in the vicinity. On these visits he was usually accompanied by George Kidd, who, besides acting as interpreter, gave him much valuable information about the characteristics of the Indians.

One day at the officers' mess Mr. Kidd caused some amusement by referring to himself as a prospective Chief

Factor, although at present he was only chief factotum, being assistant missionary, cook, waiter, bowsman and fiddler.

Mr. Snow here had his first opportunity of studying some of the advantages to the Indians of books printed in the syllabic character. This system was first used for the benefit of the Crees farther east. It may be described as a system in which the smallest unit is not a letter or part of a syllable, but usually the entire syllable. For instance, in writing the Cree word *peeh-too-ke* (come in), nine characters are used; but in the syllabic only four would be required, that is, two for the first, which calls for the aspirate, and one each for the others. Fortunately, the Cree, and the northern languages and dialects, with the single exception of the Tukudh, have but few distinct sounds, and on that account lend themselves readily to the use of the syllabic system.

The day preceding the arrival of the York brigade was a Sunday, and Mr. Snow held both morning and evening services, using the large hall of the Company's establishment for that purpose. As the congregations were made up of English-speaking people and Crees, the service was rendered partly in the one language and partly in the other. Mr. Kidd acted as interpreter at the morning service and Mr. Findlay at the evening service.

Mr. Snow's evening address was on the parable of the prodigal son. Mr. Findlay read the story from an English Bible; but so perfect was he in the Cree, that no one knew it except Mr. Snow, whose Bible he was using. Mr. Snow was, like Mr. Findlay, a man of commanding stature, and like him, too, in being full of sympathy for others. When, therefore, two such men stood side by side and spoke on the greatest theme of earth or heaven,

as it is presented in the inimitable parable of the prodigal son, they made a deep impression on their hearers, and long afterwards some of them were heard to declare that never before or since had they seen or heard anything so fine as when they looked on the young fur-trader and young missionary, and heard them deliver together their message of *"oosakihiwewin Nioohtawinan,"* the love of our Father.

CHAPTER THREE

Grand Rapids to Methy Portage

The brigade which arrived at Grand Rapids consisted of twelve boats. Among the officers on board who were returning to their respective districts, after having attended the annual meeting of the council, were the three district managers, Chief Factor Daniel Ormond, of Ile à la Crosse; Chief Factor Oliver Churchill, of Fort Chipewyan, Athabasca District; and Chief Factor Walter Bayard, of Fort Simpson, MacKenzie River District.

The Hudson's Bay Company was at this time introducing improved methods of transportation for supplying the aforenamed districts, as well as those of the prairie country of the south. The outfits for these districts were now being brought in via St. Paul, U.S.A., being forwarded from that point by Red River carts, which sometimes came through to Fort Garry or made connection with steamers which plied up and down the Red River. Promptly following the importation of supplies over the new route, the Company commenced using steamers on the northern water stretches. It showed wise foresight in thus promptly adapting itself to the requirements of civilization which was advancing from the east and south. No doubt the strain of importing supplies via Hudson's Bay had become too great. Long enough already had men carried two hundred pounds on their backs, over portages, and waded in water, dragging and lifting York boats over rocks and through shallows. Such things had to be at that time for the general good;

but now it was different, so these men took to the dry land and the Company took to steamboats and it was better for both.

It was on the second day after the arrival of the boats from York Factory that the united brigades, now numbering fifteen boats, resumed the voyage. To the satisfaction of those concerned, it was arranged that there was to be no change in the personnel of the passengers in Mr. Stait's boat until arriving at Fort Chipewyan. Mr. Stait probably well expressed the sentiments of the others when he said that they had "hit it off" so well together that there seemed no occasion for making a change any sooner. When Mr. Findlay playfully asked his friend Kidd how the arrangement suited him, he replied, "I am glad to find that there is to be no change. It must be quite perceptible that since joining this company my manners have improved, and should I ever again have the honour of taking a Bishop anywhere by dog-train, I shall scorn the idea of deceiving even a dog by the use of a make-believe name."

It is a formidable undertaking to propel fully loaded York boats hundreds of miles against current, and when the brigade of fifteen boats left Grand Rapids, this was the task that confronted it. It meant that one hundred and fifty men would day after day have to pit their strength against water power, one of nature's terrific forces. It chanced, however, that on both the Saskatchewan and English Rivers, the wind—another of nature's great forces—lent its aid to the crews, and was sometimes more than a match for the current. There were, however, a good many portages on the latter river, and at such places winds were of little avail. Generally at these portages the entire cargo had to be carried over. At one

place the boats also had to be hauled overland. This was done by placing rollers under the keel; then, while a sufficient number of men on each side kept the boat balanced, another supply of man power applied to a long rope, drew it over.

The "carrying strap" used by the men was of tanned hide, and about ten feet in length. It resembled a huge sling, the middle part of which was three or four inches wide by about eighteen inches in length. A man's load consisted of two packages weighing together about two hundred pounds. The carrying strap was fastened round the ends of one of these in such a manner that when it was placed on the back, and the broad part of the strap was slipped over the forehead, the upper side of the package was slightly below the level of the shoulders. Then the steersman placed the second package on top of this, so that the forward side rested against the carrier's head, where he contrived to retain it in position without its being fastened. The gait favoured by the carrier of such a load was a swinging trot, it having no doubt been ascertained from long experience that "slow and sure" in such a situation was a sure way to burden one's back with two hundred pounds for an unnecessary length of time; and, besides, every man had to think, and did think, of the reputation of himself and the crew to which he belonged.

Perhaps it might be thought that it would be distressing to travellers on a voyage such as this, to be the witnesses of the laborious efforts which the boatmen so frequently had to put forth to overcome the difficulties of the way; but, surprising as it may seem, it had quite the opposite effect, and this no doubt, because of the cheerful, courageous and clever manner in which they

went forward against all odds. It made the onlooker of the stronger sex feel elated as he reflected that he also was of the *genus homo*, and when by means of a strong rope the boats had to be hauled over a tough place, he took hold with the rest and shouted loud as any, "Yo-heave! Yo-heave!" However, the passengers had no occasion to exert either their muscular or vocal powers in any such manner until the voyage had extended over two hundred miles north-west of Grand Rapids. First there were sixty miles of good sailing up a deep stretch of the Saskatchewan and across Cedar Lake to Fort Chimawawin situated at its north-west corner; then ninety miles more of the Saskatchewan brought the brigade to the Pas, where a stay was made just long enough to land the officer in charge and his outfit. The next seventy miles were made under equally pleasant conditions and brought the passengers to Cumberland House, situated at the north-west end of Cumberland Lake.

As the boats sailed over this lake, Mr. Snow remarked that Cumberland House, the post they were approaching, had a decidedly more English sounding name than Chimawawin. This remark and some guesses as to its early history induced Mr. Findlay to say that when the Hudson's Bay officer, Mr. Hearne, established the fort and gave it the name of Cumberland House, he was likely trying to make himself feel at home, and get the better of *Kuskeyihten.*

In the remarks that followed the story was told of how this plunge of Mr. Hearne's from the Hudson's Bay into the interior in the year 1774, marked an important change in the Company's policy. Up to that date the Indians had been obliged to come great distances to trade with the Company at the Bay; but when the Frobisher

brothers and other traders from Canada travelled to the Saskatchewan, and delivered their goods to the Indians at their very doors, the Hudson's Bay Company found it necessary to do so also in order to retain their trade. Hence the establishment at Cumberland Lake, and soon after, of others planted farther westward and northward.

There was an Anglican missionary stationed at this point, and he and his wife were quietly doing a good work among the Indians. Mr. Snow called on these fellow-labourers, and the few evening hours they spent together were undoubtedly mutually cheering and encouraging.

When the brigade resumed the journey next day, it left behind not only Cumberland Lake but the Saskatchewan River; and for the next one hundred and thirty miles, that is, as far as Pelican Narrows, the route lay due north through a succession of lakes and rivers, which in reality are a continuance of the river flowing out of Ile à la Crosse Lake, variously named English River, Churchill River and Missinnippi. The scenery as studied from the boats was diversified and often very beautiful. Land and water seemed to be equally divided, and often rock, bush and muskeg were alike plentifully in evidence. So curious in some places was the combination of rock and water that a boat going some distance in advance of the others would seem to have approached a solid rock only to be swallowed up whole in some concealed cavern; but on approaching nearer, an opening would suddenly be revealed which was much wider than necessary for the passage of a York boat.

The rocks are in many places specked with garnet, encouraging speculation as to pockets full of gold which might be concealed in other places; but some of the passengers found it more immediately profitable and

interesting to angle for goldeye, perch and other fish which abound in these waters, while others searched around the rocks for something more immediately useful than garnet, and were usually rewarded with the discovery of one or other of the following kinds of wild fruit, viz., raspberries, blueberries, cranberries, moss-berries and eye-berries.

One night when the travellers were sitting round the camp-fire, the nature of the country through which the English River flows came under discussion, and various opinions were given as to the character of the country lying farther back, and of the probable percentage which would some day be regarded as fit for cultivation. Mr. Ormond, being an old timer and in charge of the Ile à la Crosse district, was considered the most competent to speak on this subject, and he gave it as his opinion that while there were some fine stretches of timber, and other localities where some thousands of acres might be called *terra firma*, taking it all through it was a badly mixed up country, of which possibly one half might some day be found adapted for mixed farming, or more than half if furs, fish, ducks and wild fruit were to be included in the *mixture*.

On another evening an interesting discussion took place as to the character of the sites upon which the Hudson's Bay Company's forts were built. Of one or two it was remarked that they would seem to have been selected mainly with a view to shelter from wintry storms; but of most of them it was conceded that a conspicuous position and fine scenery had most likely much to do with their location.

Mr. Bayard, who had some experience in locating some of the Company's out-posts, looked at Mr. Snow

with a broad smile, and remarked that it was fitting that when one built a house in any part of the "Great Lone Land" it should be placed where from afar it might speak of good cheer to the traveller. Perhaps it was a case of telepathy, when following Mr. Bayard's smile, Mr. Snow quoted the lines:

"As when the weary traveller gains
The height of some o'er-looking hill,
His heart revived if 'cross the plain
He eyes his home though distant still."

Mr. Bayard, being asked to state further what he considered the main factors in deciding the location of some of the important forts of the North, replied as follows:

"I do not think I should be far out were I to assert that when the Indians selected a rendezvous hundreds of years before the Hudson's Bay Company set foot in this country, they were thereby doing what plainly pointed out to the Company when it did arrive, the most suitable place for a fort; for, as a rule, in the selection of these great camping grounds, the Indians gave preference to conspicuous and picturesque places, always provided that besides being easy of access both by land and water, they were also centrally situated in a district rich in game and other products of nature which afforded them a livelihood. And since the soil that produced these things a thousand years ago has not been interfered with by the Indians, and the physical features of the country are not materially changed, the place that was suited to be an important rendezvous at that time should continue so until now and for generations to come, even though there may be many changes in the manner of obtaining a livelihood. There-

fore, when the Hudson's Bay Company placed a fort on an Indian camping ground, it showed a wise regard for the past, the present and the future."

On a beautiful evening there were sighted Stanley Mission and the neighbouring Hudson's Bay post, the two separated by about a half mile of lake-like river, and surrounded by very picturesque scenery. The entire brigade landed at the fort, and while the crews were getting their tea and making camp, a party arrived by invitation from the Mission, consisting of Rev. Mr. Smith, his lady and the school-teacher, Miss Linden; and they and the officers of the party and Mr. Snow accepted the hospitality of the officer in charge and his lady.

This meal was called tea, but it might have been called by any other meal-name except breakfast, for the officer in charge and his wife had evidently not been taken by surprise, and their table was laden with the products of the chase and the garden; and there were also handed round generous helpings of that most delicious delicacy, raspberries and cream, which in the opinion of many persons of good taste, does not take second place to any other, not even excepting strawberries and cream.

Immediately after tea there was a general dispersion. It was the regular custom at Stanley Mission during summer to call the Indians together for daily evening prayers in the church. The practice was feasible because it was appreciated by them, also because many of them found a livelihood in the vicinity.

In the large centres of civilization, a call to busy men and women to attend daily evening or morning prayer is apt to appear to them as inexpedient or non-essential piety; but here, somehow, though these fur-traders and

boatmen could also have made excuses, they put from their minds the hard journey up the Missinnippi that was to be renewed on the morrow—or, perhaps deeming it the most fitting preparation—they listened to the sound of the bells coming sweetly to them over the water like an echo of the invitation of old—"Come ye yourselves apart and rest a while," and soon every boat and canoe available was rippling the water in the direction of Stanley Mission.

Entirely apart from religious considerations the sight of such an edifice as Stanley Church in such a remote locality, never failed to surprise and interest the observant traveller. To Mr. Snow, coming fresh from England, the sight of this fair-sized church built in a pronounced English cathedral style, standing there that beautiful evening on a verdure covered point of land which sloped down gracefully to the water's edge, there was nothing lacking to impart the feeling that he was truly on English River, or even to have conveyed the impression that he was in England itself.

The missionary who came from England, and who by building this church may be said to have put the finishing touch to a beautiful English picture, was fortunate enough to have the assistance of competent and sympathetic helpers. One of these was George Sanderson, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company for many years, who assisted throughout. He also had the experience and fine workmanship of two carpenters attached to one of Sir John Franklin's expeditions, who, being obliged to pass a winter in the neighbourhood, were pleased to employ their time in this profitable manner.

After the evening service in this church, Mr. Snow and George Kidd remained at the Mission, the former being naturally interested in Missions, and the latter—

just as naturally interested in Miss Linden. Fortunately for Mr. Kidd he had had a speaking acquaintance with the Smiths in the Red River Settlement, and something more than that with Miss Linden, for they were old schoolmates.

Miss Linden was an attractive young lady, slightly over middle height and very graceful in form and movement, while as to disposition, she was as bright and cheerful as Kidd himself. Very much alike in several respects, there was this difference between them: she lived up more strictly to a high ideal, and though she did so with all the modesty consistent with courage, she had unintentionally impressed her friend with a sense of his short-comings. However, meeting thus tonight, so far away from home, amid the environments of the lonesome North, they felt simultaneously drawn towards each other, in a manner that all persons of a friendly disposition will understand without further explanation or detail. Of Mrs. Smith it may be remarked in passing, that she showed herself to be quite human, and apparently not unmindful of her spinster days, for she contrived to allow the young people the exclusive use of the sitting-room with the door open or closed as circumstances might require, so that it will be readily believed by experienced people that they spent a very pleasant and profitable hour.

Mr. Kidd had paid the Lindens a visit before leaving the Settlement, and was, therefore, able to supplement the news Miss Linden had received by letter with his version of how nicely her folks were getting along, taking care to bestow particular attention on her mother, whom he described as being as strong and jolly as ever, causing Miss Linden to say, with the tears not very far, and with an ineffably tender modulation of her voice, "Dear mother!"

After that their conversation became of a more personal and intimate character. Miss Linden admitted that she occasionally found the solitary life a little depressing, but that by keeping busy and falling back on Mrs. Smith when it came to the worst, she managed to do very nicely. Kidd turned this remark to advantage by remarking: "That's where Mrs. Smith with her husband has the advantage over you. She gets so much comfort out of him that she has some to spare for a less fortunate sister."

"I am not complaining," said Miss Linden, "neither do I covet anything or anybody belonging to my neighbour."

Kidd laughed, and she adroitly changed the subject, asking him about his prospects in the Company's service. Encouraged thus with an innocent starter, that gentleman straightened up himself, cleared his throat, and assumed an air of great importance as he replied: "Miss Linden, you see now before you one who is destined shortly to be enrolled as an officer of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company."

"George, let me suggest that you substitute the words Chief Factor for officer."

"Thank you for your assistance," he replied, and then he told her of his contract with the Company, and noticed with satisfaction that she acted as a very much interested listener.

Later he told her that he believed he had the makings of a fairly successful fur-trader; but that he was perfectly unsuited for the life of a hermit, and that for that reason no sooner had he completed his contract with the Company he intended to look around these particular

parts for some lone spinster whom he could rescue from the ennui of the solitary life of the North.

Looking significantly at him, she replied, "The worst of you, George, is that one can never tell when you are serious."

"Well, Gertrude, it's myself that is a serious man this very minute, and unless, out of the goodness of your heart, you give me a little help, I shall be seriously hurt."

At this Miss Linden made an attempt to look dignified as she asked, "What in the world do you mean?" The discerning eye of George Kidd saw that her real feelings were but thinly veiled, and the only effect of her question was to cause him to draw his chair nearer to hers so that they were separated from each other by only a small corner of the table, and seated thus, and looking into each other's faces, there doubtless occurred some telepathy from the corners of their eyes which was not displeasing to either of them.

Replying to her question—"What do you mean?" he said, "Let me tell you seriously what I do mean. When I arrived at Stanley Mission this evening I looked forward with pleasure to the chance of a chat with you before going on northward with the boats tomorrow morning—nothing more, I assure you; but now that I have seen you, while there is still upon me the old feeling that you are too good for me, you have inspired me as never before to the ambition to be worthy of you. But for my respect for you, I think I might have told you before that I love you; but, respect or not, I tell you so now; and I ask whether you will be willing to marry me, if, in a year or two, I make good in your opinion and my own?"

"George, I have no doubt that if ever I do as you are asking, you will then discover that if Gertie Linden is the angelic person you took her to be, she is nevertheless afflicted with feet of clay. As to my answer, that were easy enough were I to consult my feelings only, as I feel towards you as you feel towards me; but this is a serious matter, and I consent only on the condition which you have named; but, conscious of the feet of clay, I would amend this condition, substituting the words, 'such time as we are mutually satisfied that we are fit,' for you know that we must think of others besides our two selves."

"Quite so! Quite so! Ahem! Thank you!"

"George! Do be serious! I would not like to make the mistake of a very dear girl friend of mine who married a drunkard, and, as far as I can see, has nothing to look forward to but shame and misery for herself and her children. And do you know, I have been told that you were seen drunk on one occasion at least."

"You told me just now that it was hard to know when I was serious. Well, you have got me very serious now. I admit that on one occasion I was very drunk, and I confess to you that I am not sorry, for I can now speak from experience and warn my innocent friends of the awful effects of imbibing four glasses of Hudson's Bay rum. If there is such a thing as a gold-cure I got it that time, for ever since then I seem alike bereft of the inclination or power to repeat the performance. And no wonder, for the thing is utterly idiotic. A friend told me shortly afterwards that for once in my life I had looked to be perfectly sober which, you must admit, goes to show that appearances are very deceiving."

"Perhaps so, and perhaps you do have a lot of seriousness just a little beneath the surface. At any rate, George, I intend to trust you."

"Thank you for your confidence; and at the same time I would say that I do not resent your remarks. Your scruples are justified. I should be serious; and as to drink, one cannot be too careful, and I regard him as a wise man who guards against a growing fondness for it by carefully avoiding its habitual use."

Just then a clock struck ten, the hour agreed upon for returning to camp, and as the lovers stood up they intuitively placed hands on each other's shoulders and the man said: "It may be a year before we meet again," and that was the prelude to their first kiss; and the man said again: "It might be two years," and they kissed again; and the girl caught on and said: "It might be three," and they kissed a third time, and then proceeded to look innocent before meeting the others.

Leaving Stanley Mission early next morning the brigade continued its journey, and after crossing some more portages, and passing more delectable river and lake scenery along the next three hundred miles, they came to Ile à la Crosse Lake, at the southern end of which is the district fort which bears the name of the lake. As Mr. Ormond was manager of this district, he and two of the boats' crews ended the voyage here.

A stay of three hours was allowed at this place, which permitted of Mr. and Mrs. Ormond keeping up the Company's reputation of being generous feeders of passing travellers. There was the usual bounteous spread, which was all the more appreciated because the food provided was fresh and seasonable, being in this respect

a pleasant departure from the substantial but too monotonous fare of the travellers. The boatmen also enjoyed the benefit of a change of diet, for during their short stay they enjoyed a lively trade with the Ile à la Crossians, bartering off a meal or so of their pork and flour for the game, fish and berries of the residents.

On leaving this fort the boats were propelled by sail or oar for the next few days, first to the north end of Ile à la Crosse Lake, then up the La Loche River into La Loche Lake, to the post on the north-west of the lake, where all cargoes were discharged.

The brigade had now travelled nine hundred miles up-stream from Grand Rapids at the mouth of the Saskatchewan and arrived at the watershed or height of land commonly called Long Portage—or in the French—Portage la Loche. It may be said that there is presented to view at this point a small portion of the rim which separates two huge basins—that to the south and east through which flows the Saskatchewan, Nelson and Churchill Rivers, and that to the north and west through which flows the MacKenzie River with it many convergent streams.

This rim or divide is twelve miles across, hence the name *Long Portage.* Until within a few years of the date of this voyage the boats had to be hauled over by man-power, an undertaking which was all the more formidable owing to the road passing over extensive beds of pure sand. At the time of our story, however, things were not quite so bad, as the goods were taken across by means of oxen and carts, and placed aboard other boats at the north end.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methy Portage to the Liard

When the boatmen went over the top—that is to say, crossed over the Long Portage—they passed into the inner edge of the MacKenzie River basin, where they were re-formed into a brigade on the Clear Water River, and thence borne down-stream to their respective destinations on an ever increasing volume of water, the first appreciable increase being when they reached the confluence of the Clear Water and Athabasca Rivers, where on the bold intervening point stands Fort McMurray. The banks of the Athabasca River in this vicinity are very high—possibly one thousand feet—and are composed of a mixture of earth, sand and tar, which it is believed will be of great service at some future day for road making and other purposes. Tar in an unmixed state is also found in abundance, furnishing the Company with all that it needs in the North for boat-tightening purposes. There is also another place where the Company's voyageurs are wont to imbibe freely of the waters of a strongly flavoured sulphur spring; while at still another place natural gas has been known to be freely and continuously escaping for a long period, all of which, it is believed, goes to show that, given sufficient time for development, there are sure to be discoveries made in these regions which will not merely arouse wide-spread interest, but be of great benefit to the country.

It was not necessary to stop at nights while travelling down the Athabasca River, except for the purpose of "boiling the kettle," for before darkness set in the boats

were lashed together, and thus united, the entire brigade safely and quietly floated onward while the boatmen lay contentedly on their backs and followed with their gaze the incense ascending from many pipes towards the star-spangled canopy above, till the pipes one by one went out and were set aside, while their owners dropped off to sleep and dreamed that portages and kindred trials were mostly behind, and that now they were being quickly borne towards "Home Sweet Home."

To those of them whose home was at Fort Chipewyan the dream was speedily fulfilled, for in two days the brigade covered the one hundred and seventy-five miles between Fort McMurray and the Athabasca Lake, and the wind being favourable, the boats proceeded under sail, making the ten miles to Fort Chipewyan in about one hour. This Fort is delightfully situated on the shore of the south-west end of the lake. The houses are neatly built and whitewashed and stand at the foot of the lofty hills which rise gradually to the north and are covered in most places with a rich growth of spruce and jack pine.

Chief Factor Churchill and his excellent lady were noted far and wide for their hospitality, and on this occasion they regaled the travellers with a meal from which they were not sorry to find flap-jack and pork excluded, and in their place such substitutes as fish and venison served with potatoes, cabbage and green peas, luxuries for which some of them were by this time extremely hungry.

The passengers in Mr. Stait's boat had now reached the parting of the ways. Mr. Stait went up the Peace River, Mr. Thomson remained at Fort Chipewyan, and Mr. Snow, Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd continued northward with the MacKenzie River brigade.

This brigade now commenced the descent of the Great Slave River, which is the name given to that portion of the MacKenzie River through which the Athabasca Lake is emptied into Great Slave Lake. In the descent of this section of the MacKenzie about half a dozen portages and as many rapids were successfully passed; and in a few days the brigade camped at Fort Resolution, which stands at the entrance of the river into Great Slave Lake.

On the morning of the following day a gale was blowing from the north, but late in the forenoon, after a lengthy consultation between Mr. Bayard and the guide, Sherboneau, it was decided that the wind had so far subsided that it would be safe to proceed, so after an early dinner the guide shouted the order to embark.

The course taken was south-west, in which direction lay Hay River post, seventy-five miles distant, with Pine Point about thirty miles on the way, the nearest place where it was practicable to make a landing on account of the sea that was on.

Whatever the voyageurs may have felt at the prospect of a thirty mile sail over such a sea, it was only a little of what they felt when they came to try it, for time and again when a white-crested wave would strike upon a low-lying starboard gunwale, it would break over the boat and sprinkle the occupants. But once in the open there was nothing for it but to keep straight ahead, with no other relief than that of easing off to larboard when a particularly huge wave was seen to be advancing.

By the time the first of the boats had reached shelter, the last one had fallen far to the rear and gave the onlookers on shore some minutes of anxiety as they watched its reelings to and fro. Some blamed the boat,

some the steersman, and once an inexperienced and nervous party gave a loud gasp of horror, believing that it had taken its last plunge; but it had not. On it came again like some live creature threatened with death, but determined to live—slowly, surely and bravely fighting its way to the place of safety, and when at length it rounded the point that was to give it shelter, there went up a hearty cheer from those on land, to which those on board as heartily responded.

Mr. Bayard, looking into the boat, and seeing that the cargo was all there and all right, remarked to the steersman, "You got through, but it was '*atatow*' " (Cree word for hardly). And a Scottish greenhorn, catching on to the Cree word, asked Mr. Kidd, "What does that mean?" He replied, "The same as the English 'nip and tuck,' or 'touch and go,' or 'by the skin of the teeth.' And how, may I ask, would a Scotsman say '*atatow*' in Gaelic?" The Scotsman told him; and often afterwards, on the remainder of this voyage, these simple-minded voyageurs got very considerable fun from saying "hardly" in three languages and with varying degrees of success.

By the time the boatmen had refreshed themselves for the third time that day with bannock, bacon and tea, the wind had so far subsided that it was deemed safe to resume the journey. The sailing from this point to Hay River Post was a pleasure; but in entering the river for the purpose of landing at the post one of the steersmen missed the channel, and the boat, striking a sand-bar, was in imminent danger of being swamped.

As it turned out, everybody on board had his own theory as to what was the proper thing to do when a fully laden boat sailing over a rough lake suddenly strikes a sand-bar. Some were for jumping in to the lake

to lift the boat over; some were starting to lower the sail; another found a pole and pushed on it all he was good for. As for the steersman, he spread himself over the stern-sheets and screamed orders in three languages what not to do, and especially did he implore them not to lower the sail. Perhaps he was right. At any rate, it was his place to know what not to do, except perhaps to scream, and after a second bump, the waves, most likely assisted by the sail, carried the boat over the bar.

As the afternoon was wearing on and the boatmen were anxious to make the most of the favourable wind, the voyage was continued after a half hour's stay at Hay River. The course taken was now north-west in the direction of Big Island, where the shores of the lake gradually grow closer until they form the banks of the MacKenzie River proper.

Night was coming on when the camping place was first discernible in the distance, and gave opportunity for another feat of super-navigation such as that accomplished on Lake Winnipeg, as already described. Again it was a starless night of almost inky blackness, yet Sherboneau confidently told his fellow-steersman that he would go ahead, and on entering the harbour, set birch bark alight on a pole to show them the way in. And he did just as he said, let who will explain how.

Early the next day the brigade reached Fort Providence, which stands at the right bank of the river about forty miles from Big Island. There is a large Roman Catholic Mission at this place, which includes a convent.

From Fort Providence to Fort Simpson, travelling went on night and day precisely as on the Athabasca River. Once only did the travellers stop long enough to

do more than prepare for a floating meal, and that was at Rabbitskin River, twenty-three miles from Fort Simpson, where they landed long enough to deliver a few letters to one L—— and his family who were keeping a small ranch for the Hudson's Bay Company. The visit was, no doubt, something long to be remembered, and the visitors crowded into them all the news they could think of in the short time at their disposal.

On arriving at Fort Simpson the visitors and residents of the fort enjoyed each other's company for a few days, and then the former began to leave for their respective stations. Mr. Findlay was appointed to fill a vacancy at Fort Liard, due to the officer, Mr. Donald, who had been in charge for years, being absent on furlough. It was not usual with the Hudson's Bay Company thus to give so young a man his first opportunity of actual fur-trading by placing him in charge of so important a post; but then his superiors took his early up-bringing into consideration as well as his character and popularity. They knew him to be a favourite among the Company's employees, and that his knowledge of Indians and his kindly disposition would make it an easy matter for him to adapt himself to the requirements of the fur trade, and they made no mistake; the loyalty with which employees and Indians alike served under him, was wonderful; and the secret of it all was the kindness and consideration with which he treated every one.

Mr. Findlay knew Fort Liard rather well by description long before he had seen it, and afterwards learned from actual observation that the upper Liard and upper Peace River countries are strikingly alike in soil, climate and scenery, and also alike noted for a plentiful supply of moose and such fur-bearing animals as bear and beaver.

When he arrived at Fort Liard he found about fifty Indian families camped there, who were wont to assemble thus every autumn, as did the Indians of other northern tribes at their respective trading posts, in order to have a social time together and also to secure their winter supplies of clothing and ammunition, and the three commodities—tobacco, tea and sugar, which, like people of other shades and colours, they seem to regard as both necessities and luxuries.

As might be expected when the Hudson's Bay Company came to do business with the Indians, it would adapt itself to some extent to their intelligence and methods, and for that reason the credit system and Indian present figured largely in its dealings with them. After all, when one gets down to the root of the matter, there is not such a difference as may appear on the surface between the uncultured Indian's notion of business and those of his white brother, and the Hudson's Bay Company soon found that out and harmonized the two to their mutual satisfaction. Everything was done with a view of encouraging the Indians to hunt, and when they did, they expected to make two ends meet, which they usually did. If, however, through sickness or other misfortune they failed, they could, on the strength of a good record, find grace in the sight of the officer in charge. In all good business there is a scope for the practice of benevolence, for though money makes the mare go, it takes benevolence to make it go cheerfully. It may go well at eight per cent; it will go better at one *per saint*, always better than a ten per cent rebate which may be only a camouflage. In this cold and practical world it seems necessary to put a premium on imagination and a rebate of five or even ten per cent is a polite concession to our imaginary independence.

The Hudson's Bay Company's neat little motto, "pro pelle cutem," may be regarded as a manly appeal to a manly love of independence and a declaration of its purpose "to be true and just in all its dealings," yet it has been insinuated that the motto also gave out a hint of what was liable to befall the hairy scalp of possible enemies; but, of course, reference is therein made to a much less ferocious animal than he whose tongue has never been tamed, viz., to the beaver which was selected by the Company as the standard of value, always provided that it was a *made beaver*, it being evidently assumed that however high a beaver might carry its head as it swam its native waters, or however loudly it might slap those waters with its powerful tail as it disappeared beneath them, it remained an unmade creature until such time as somebody laid it out, and next laid it on its back and drew a sharp knife down its belly from its chin to its tail as the preliminary to the removal of its skin, which being stretched tightly over a frame and dried, became then a made beaver. This was the literal thing or standard meant by the Company's officials when in their book-keeping they wrote M. B.

In Mr. Findlay's time the skin and M. B. were synonymous terms as regards value. To an outsider who might purchase from the Company's store by the M. B. but make payment in cash, the M. B. worked out at about fifty cents. In later years, in consequence of keen competition, the made beaver doubled its price and the name became paradoxical, and *pro pelle cutem* as applied in practice meant two skins for a skin. Later still, when the spread was further widened by reduction in the price of goods, the purchasing power of the pelt, which was the original standard of value, was more than quadrupled. Yet the

Indians became decidedly poorer, because the greater inducements to hunt acted adversely on the supply of fur-bearing animals.

The Hudson's Bay Company's method of doing business with the Indians was no doubt well thought out as well as tactfully carried out, so that the Indians, as a rule, learned to place absolute confidence in the word of a Hudson's Bay official or master as they were wont to call him; indeed it would be a good thing for the world if the educated portions of the human family placed as much confidence in the Bible as the Indians of the North did in the absolute dependableness of whatever went into the books of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Need it be said it was the policy of the Company to help the Indians verify, as far as they were capable of doing, the correctness of their accounts.

In this connection it may be said that a beneficent Creator would seem to have designed or approved of the decimal system of reckoning, when He provided His rational creatures with ten fingers; and in their calculating the Indians certainly made good use of these ready reckoners, and they were allowed by the Company to supplement them on shopping days by means of artificial counters.

Sometimes as a preliminary to the outfitting of the Indians, the officer in charge would have them meet him in the large hall on the evening of a convenient day, when the number of M. B. to be allowed each hunter would be settled. In doing this the consideration was given in the first place to the man's record as a hunter, and in the second place to the size of his family; and if, in the latter respect, there was a disparity between two men who were

equal in the other respect, precedence was given to the man with the larger family. Only one hunter or a hunter and his wife were allowed to enter the saleshop at the same time. Then supposing the number of M. B. arranged for was one hundred, that number of counters in the form of large feathers, small sticks or lead discs would be passed over to the hunter, who would arrange them on the counter in ten piles of ten each. Then purchasing started, probably with an order for tea. If the purchase was five pounds, one of the little piles was passed over. If he next ordered ten pounds of sugar, another of the little piles disappeared, and so it went on until all were gone. Then most likely the hunter and his wife would jog each other's memories, and remember something else which was much to be desired, and the master would just as likely be quite prepared for this and consent to a trifling additional advance, and possibly finish off with a much valued present of a few raisins or a pound or so of chocolate or something equally tasty.

Among the purchases there was sure to be a four-point blanket or a large shawl, and into this the squaw would carefully place their purchases, and knotting the corners securely together, would pass them over her shoulders, and if her husband could in any sense have been said to be burdened with her support, she certainly relieved him of the heavier end of that burden when she meekly bowed her head to carry the huge bundle of newly acquired wealth, and then followed him, as with head erect he led the way to their lodge—both probably as nearly in a state of ecstasy as was possible for them, simply because the master had trusted them, and in their bundle was as much sugar as would sweeten their cup for a whole moon, and tobacco enough to provide them

with smokes for a few moons longer, and—after that! Well! Just after that—?

By the end of November the last of the Indians had left for their hunting grounds, and by that date also, the men of the establishment had put their houses in first-class condition for resisting the usual siege of winter.

Mr. Kidd, who was given the supervision of this work, told the men that they were to be as wise as the bear and provide themselves with a comfortable nest before it became too cold. After this had been done Mr. Findlay informed them that they were not to follow the example of the bear any further, by starting to lick their paws in a semi-dormant condition, and he now gave them a general outline of what they were to do, by starting each man to his work. This was done systematically but without trying to secure service according to cast-iron rule, for with his talent for leading, Mr. Findlay had no occasion to attempt driving. Our aim, he was wont to say confidentially to Mr. Kidd, should be to deprive ourselves and them of all excuses for idleness, for that man is not yet born who can live in constant idleness without getting himself or others into mischief.

With respect to his own time there were many days during that winter when his official duties, all told, did not occupy over an hour, so he had to do some planning in order that the other twenty-three might be spent pleasantly, harmlessly or usefully. On an average he spent two hours daily taking physical exercise in the bracing wintry air, either in visiting his string of traps or in taking a drive by dog-train. In addition to this he took some more physical exercise within doors over a carpenter's bench, making some neat chairs and other household furniture, for which Mrs. Donald sent him her hearty

thanks as soon as she saw them on her return from her visit to the south. With equal satisfaction he spent some hours every day in reading the books which he had taken up with him from the splendid circulating library at Fort Simpson, and also in solving all manner of mathematical problems, of which, no doubt, a goodly number were only negatively useful. Lastly he devoted some time to brightening the lives of the Company's employees, and by these various means escaped the perils of idleness to which his good mother had referred at parting, when she said to him with tears in her eyes: "Ah, my boy, it's those long spells with nothing to do which try one so in the North." To which remark he had replied with a laugh: "Never fear, mother, there will be no long spells, for I am going to run opposition to his Satanic majesty by keeping myself and everybody about me busy."

The Company's establishment at Fort Liard consisted of eight unmarried men and four married couples, twenty souls in all. Among the married men was one William Godfrey, who seemed to be of use to the Company chiefly because he was so insinuatingly good-natured and easy going that he helped to make the established order of things work out smoothly. He always took a brotherly interest in what his neighbours were doing or might do, and gave them credit for being equally interested in his undertakings and good intentions, with which he was always ready to make them acquainted, acknowledging at the same time his dependence upon Providence, by prefacing his remarks with the expression, "please God to spare me."

Perhaps to a married man in a Hudson's Bay out-post there could be no softer billet than the one which would come his way should his wife happen to be engaged as

cook in the big house, and that was the pleasant lot which fell to Mr. Godfrey, largely, no doubt, on account of his insinuating good-nature, as well as because his wife was known to have mastered the three arts of boiling, frying and roasting.

As Mr. George Kidd had now been raised to the rank of clerk, he occupied a place in the officers' quarters, and now with Mr. Godfrey quartered in the kitchen with his wife, it could be said that Mr. Findlay had with him under the same roof two lieutenants who by natural disposition were all fitted to aid him in making the winter at Fort Liard pleasant and profitable to the residents of the fort.

Of a chance Company's officer it might be said that he preserved his dignity at the cost of his popularity; but, whether in doing so he advanced the interests of the Company or the better promoted his own happiness is extremely doubtful. As to Mr. Findlay he knew from the example of his father and other good men in the service, that the officer who respects himself in all his dealings with others can safely go a long way side by side with those others, without forfeiting either their respect or their affection. Mr. Findlay, therefore, felt safe in following the common practice of the Company's officers of occupying the hall of the big house for an hour or so every evening after tea, where in winter time they sat before the cheerful open fire and smoked a friendly pipe together on the level, discussing the news of the day if there were any, or such other subjects as might be felt to have some bearing on the affairs of their own little world. Generally when the men were thus engaged, the four women of the fort were also taking care of each other by getting together in one or other of their houses.

On the Sunday morning following the departure of the Indians for their hunting grounds, Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd, while seated at breakfast, discussed the usual manner in which Sunday was observed at the Company's out-posts. The conversation commenced by Mr. Findlay remarking to his companion, "I suppose you are aware, George, that there is a rule on the Company's books to the effect that in any of their trading posts where there are Protestants, the Anglican Church service shall be read for their benefit by the officer in charge at least once a Sunday?"

"Yes, I know that Mr. —— observes the rule regarding Sunday; but you should just hear him on Monday when he gets mad with one of his Indians."

"Oh, well, any man who has to deal with Chipewyans should have some allowance made for him if occasionally 'the head flies off the handle.' As to the placing of such a rule on their books as the one we are speaking of, I do think it is a credit to the Company; but, of course, it was not intended to be compulsory, for to attempt to constrain men by rule to a course in which their sympathies are not enlisted, is to ensure the frustration of the purpose intended, for the rule will fall into contempt and be treated as a farce.

"My father and some of his contemporaries observed the rule; and speaking from personal knowledge I can say that it was productive of much good. Now, however, because there are a few more missionaries in the country, we Hudson's Bay officials appear to excuse ourselves from anything so serious as conducting a religious service.

"The situation presents itself to me in this light. I cannot roll the burden of the twenty souls residing in this

Fort Liard upon the shoulders of the nearest missionary who happens to be hundreds of miles from here. Therefore, in a moral sense these twenty souls face me, and say, 'Well, Mr. Ookimao (master), what can you do for us? You are educated. You can tell us things which will help to drive away *Kuskeyihten,* and make us brave and strong to do right.' And what can I say? With the utter absence of the public ordinances of religion I feel that I am placed under moral obligation to give them such a service as will at least revive sacred memories of religious privileges which they enjoyed in other places, bringing some cheer into their lonely lives and enabling them to brace up and go forward, 'steadfast in faith and joyful through hope.' "

Said Mr. Kidd to Mr. Findlay, "You just start this thing, and count on me to stand by you through thick and thin, for apart from the good it would do me and others, I know of two good women—my mother and Miss Linden—who would laugh for very joy, because well do they know, as well as we, that though religion does not in every case make a man good, it gives him a better fighting chance in that direction than anything else on earth that we know of."

Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd agreed that if there were any kind of religious service to which all might be induced to come regularly, it would be a service of song, so it was decided to start one at seven o'clock that very evening in the hall.

About an hour after this had been settled, they adjourned to the hall, where they were joined by Mr. Godfrey, who simultaneously entered from the kitchen to enjoy a smoke with them according to his sociable nature.

When informed by Mr. Findlay of the service of song to be held in the hall every Sunday evening, he clasped his hands and looking up devoutly said: "Splendid, sir! Splendid! And won't it take our thoughts back to the many happy hours spent that way in good Red River Settlement. When I first came out to the North, sir, I did very much miss the Sunday services; but a man gets used to anything, sir, and I soon got to be like the rest at breaking Sunday; but one Sunday morning, sir, I got a lesson that cured me for the rest of my life, sir. You see that old wound, sir?" As he spoke he held up his left hand, upon the thumb of which a slight scar was discernible after very close scrutiny.

"Let us have the story," said Mr. Findlay.

"Well it was this way, sir, and this happened at Great Slave Lake when I had been three years in the Company's service under Mr. Blackburn. I don't know, sir, if the devil has anything to do with the fowls of the air, but anyhow, that spring the wavies arrived on a Sunday and there were tens of thousands of them. Flock after flock I noticed them make for a favourite feeding place of theirs—a point about a mile from the fort. Taking my double barrel I made for that point, keeping under cover of the bush until I knew I was opposite the flock from the noise they were making. Then I made straight for them and easily got within good shooting distance. There they were, sir, digging in the gravel like so many pigs, and more flocks coming and the most awful noise going on all the time, 'cao, cao, cao, cao, ga-ga-ga-ga,' you know, sir. Now for it, says I to myself. And I rose to my feet and as they rose pulled the left trigger, and I never got a chance to pull the other, for that first shot had blown the barrel of my gun to smithers and my right shoulder was

aching, my left ear ringing and my left thumb bleeding; and from that day to the present I have not fired another shot on Sunday, for I believe the man who breaks Sunday will come to grief sooner or later."

"Mr. Godfrey," said Mr. Kidd, "you and Sir Mathew Hale, I notice, are of the same opinion on that last point; but he does not express himself in quite the same words. He puts it this way:

'A sabbath profaned,
Whate'er may be gained,
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow.'

Possibly he had heard of your accident."

Then the two last speakers looked at each other without giving themselves away—Mr. Kidd quite displeased that he could not be quite sure whether Mr. Godfrey knew that he was only joking, while the latter was sufficiently cunning not to let on that he didn't know for certain whether he was.

Were it only those deeds which are performed from purely disinterested motives that are to meet with a Divine reward, no doubt the bounty of heaven would not be very severely taxed; but heaven knows how necessary it is to pronounce those men and women disinterested and unselfish who become so intent on each other's good, that each forgets to reserve a soft place for himself or herself, and when it is said that the service of song carried on at Fort Liard was begun and continued on through the winter from purely disinterested motives, that is the sense in which the words are to be understood. It was a success because all realized its need, and also realized that the more thoroughly they were united in its attainment the greater the good to them individually, and considering

the nature of their quest, let us believe that they had suppressed all selfish promptings in a manner most creditable to earthly mortals. It has to be admitted, however, that the personality of the leader in this service had something to do with its success, for who does not know that there are empty pews in many a church which are to be attributed to a lack in the personality of the minister?

Perhaps the fact of Mr. Findlay not being a minister was not entirely to his disadvantage in his humble religious undertaking, for one of the married couples, Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamin, were Roman Catholics, and when Mr. Kidd went to invite them to the service of song he made the most of Mr. Findlay being just a layman. Perhaps he need not have done that, for these two, like the others, were devoted to the master, and although at first Mrs. Beauchamin had acted bashfully, a common trouble with the younger women of the North on meeting strangers, she soon forgot that, and at Mr. Findlay's brief visits, on his entrance and departure, would unite with her husband in a hearty, "Bonjour, Monsieur."

Co-incident with the first of these social evenings in the hall there were diligent preparations for the Christmas festivities, especially on the part of the women, who vied with each other in displaying their skill with the needle, and elegant moccasins, leggings, fire-bags and the like were being made ready against the great New Year's dance. Then there were preparations for the dispatch of the regular mid-winter packet, an event which was especially interesting to Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd, both from an official and private standpoint.

Mr. Findlay wrote a long letter to Nellie Blain, which he began and ended by representing himself as her very

dear friend, fully knowing that she, as a clever young lady, would perfectly understand what he meant, and clearly foresee the climax to which such a style of address must inevitably lead, especially with a little encouragement on her part as well as his own. He gave her a graphic account of his journey out, and of the North country and his doings since his arrival, stating that so far he was not wholly dissatisfied with his success as an *Okimasis*. Then he went on to say that he did not suppose that she would be very much surprised to hear that he often thought of her, and sometimes had even gone so far as to dream about her. He also told her that he was looking forward to the day next summer when they would meet at Fort Chipewyan, when he and other eligible young officers would doubtless be competing for her smiles, each, of course, hoping to be regarded preferentially.

Mr. Kidd also wrote to Miss Linden, in which he gave a fine description of the country, saying that he was quite pleased with it as well as his own work, only that the country would be better for a few more ladies, and that his work might also be better if he had the aid of just one particular lady. Referring to their last meeting, he said that he was living up to the resolution then unanimously passed; but that he was not struck on amendments. "Don't you try it on yourself. I took you just as you were, and I don't risk any changes. As to when we are to meet again, I think at present we can only go over the old ground: it may be a year. It may be two. Perhaps it will be three. . . . "

With the packet off his hands, Mr. Findlay felt that he was not likely to be needed at the fort, so one morning, after talking the matter over with Mr. Kidd, it was decided that the two should each in turn go on a moose

hunt under the direction of one of the fort hunters, a Cree named Panawis.

Mr. Findlay took his turn first, and in a few days returned after having killed a fine doe, the meat of which was brought in by one of the men to whom meat hauling was specially assigned, and who, for that reason, was called a meat hauler. As this was the first venison brought to the fort for over two months, and the rations both in quality and quantity were already on a downward scale, everyone felt highly pleased, and that evening, when the men assembled before the open fire for the usual social hour, they became quite enthusiastic over Mr. Findlay's prowess as a hunter.

At this season in the North the residents in many an out-post looked upon the fort hunter as standing between them and starvation, and the joy of Christmas and New Year was sometimes affected by a rather unpromising outlook as to the necessary supply of food for the winter. And no wonder, for every old timer in the Company's service could tell of trying experiences of starvation in one or more of the posts where he had lived, when one meal a day would have to suffice for a week or a month, or three little meals, if one preferred it that way, with plenty of tea and smokes, in any case, worked in between. Fort Liard itself had its tragic story of something which had happened within the recollection of the older inhabitants.

An officer and one other employee were sent to the fort in autumn, and nothing having been heard of them during the entire winter, a party was sent out in spring to see what had happened. The officer was found alone, and was keeping himself alive by snaring rabbits, at that

season beginning to have their young. He gave some strange explanation as to the absence of his companion, who has never been heard of unto this day, thereby furnishing occasion for all manner of speculation as to his probable fate.

As the residents of Fort Liard were familiar with this story, they might well be pleased to know that if things came to the worst there were men in the fort who could be relied upon to procure larger game than rabbits.

On comparing notes, it was found that Godfrey was the only country-born man among them who had never killed a moose, and on Mr. Findlay expressing surprise, he said, "Well, sir, I am surprised at it myself; but please God to spare me, I'll kill one yet before I die. And do you know, sir, I think it would help me to go off more easy-like, particularly if the meat were as sweet as that of the one you killed."

"Cheer up! Mr. Godfrey," said Mr. Kidd. "You know the Indians believe in the happy hunting grounds."

"Yes, but I am no heathen."

Mr. Kidd here turned to Mr. Findlay and said, "I suppose, sir, Mr. Godfrey and I could not both be spared from the fort at the same time?"

Mr. Findlay appeared to think the matter over for half a minute, and then replied with a smile, "It will be a most difficult thing to spare Mr. Godfrey; but then the prospect of an extra moose at a time like this is not to be despised, and if it will be a comfort to Mr. Godfrey to have a moose fall by his own hand before his own time is up, by all means let him have the chance. We'll get along without him somehow for a little while."

And so it was that in the cold, short days of January, when the sun remained only about four hours above the horizon, Messrs. Kidd and Godfrey set out on their hunt, accompanied by one dog-driver and his team.

CHAPTER FIVE

Moose Hunting, Bear Stories, and the Winter Packet

Panawis and his wife had been to the fort for the New Year festivities, and the pleasant recollections thereof were still fresh in their minds. Somehow, too, when going through the lively steps and turns of the Red River Jig, they had risen a notch in their self esteem, so that even the Company's officers themselves were not too awfully above them, and these visits of theirs coming so soon after was another social uplift. Of course, with their socialistic upbringing and unsophisticated ideas, the absence of a partition in their lodge did not interfere with their ability to entertain Mr. Kidd and his companion, and if, in doing so, they were obliged for the time being to renounce the privacy of their home, a certain modesty coupled with ingenuity enabled them to do so without inflicting undue discomfort or inconvenience on themselves or their guests.

Mr. Findlay had arranged for Mr. Kidd's visit, so that the hunter and his wife were not taken unawares. The tent was fresh carpeted throughout with spruce brush. Preparations for a hearty meal were set going the minute they entered, and the very best they had and plenty of it was set before the hungry travellers. After doing full justice to the meal set before them, Mr. Kidd presented to their host and hostess some tea, sugar, chocolate and flour, in all about five pounds. It was evident that they were highly delighted and very thankful, and well might

Panawis, who was a regular voyageur, enjoy his share of such things, as he had helped bring them thousands of miles, carrying some of them part of the way on his back.

Next morning it was still quite dark when Panawis roused up his visitors and invited them to the breakfast which his wife had prepared, and the first streak of dawn was scarcely yet discernible when the three sportsmen left camp, Panawis taking the lead on his five-foot snowshoes and the others following on snowshoes of the ordinary size.

Panawis had discovered the fresh tracks of two moose on the previous day, and taking into account the direction of the wind, the character of the country and the habits of the moose, he now made a bee-line for a point where he was pretty certain he would run across their tracks again. He was not far astray, and it was still early in the forenoon when they crossed their path once more. Feeling carefully around their foot-prints, he was able to tell with certainty that they had passed there some time the day before. He then travelled to leeward in a curved line, and had not gone more than a mile when he came to their tracks once more, and this time pronounced them quite fresh. In subdued tones he pointed to a small birch with its twigs eaten off, and then to some recent droppings, with the remark, "*Mitooni keespoowuk*" (they are quite full). Knowing from the time of day and the tell-tale marks he saw about him, that the moose were likely even now lying down somewhere nearby—knowing also the wonderful cunning shown by these animals in selecting their bed, which they unfailingly do by circling back and selecting a spot close to where they had passed some time before, where they can to the best advantage employ the three senses, hearing, seeing and smelling, in

detecting the approach of an enemy, and especially one who may be following their tracks—Panawis, pitting his intellect against the instincts of the moose, figured out approximately where they would be resting. They moved forward—again Panawis studied the situation—again they moved forward—for the last time they pause—the tension is getting too much for poor Godfrey—in desperation he is beginning to whisper to Mr. Kidd and had got as far as "Please G—" when Sh-h-h came from the Cree, who had crouched to the snow and was pointing to a certain spot. Almost at the same instant two moose were on their feet; but not for long, for two shots fired in quick succession brought them back to the snow whence they had risen. The first shot, according to previous arrangement, was by Godfrey, who took the animal to the right, and the second was by Mr. Kidd. The Indian laughed with pleasure, and turning towards his companions said, *"Kinihta machinawao,"* You hunt well. It turned out that Mr. Godfrey had hit his animal in the head, inflicting a wound which was not immediately fatal, and as he approached it, it suddenly sprang to its feet, and being in a dazed condition, made a rush straight ahead, which unfortunately was in a line for Mr. Godfrey, who, being completely taken by surprise, evidently decided to give the moose the right of way, but in his haste to do so he stumbled, and falling on his back as the moose staggered past, he threw up his snowshoed feet and while kicking the air, let out a fearful roar. Scrambling hastily to his feet he was in the act of raising his gun when the staggering moose fell over for good. The first shot had done its work.

Mr. Kidd and Panawis came up to him, and with great difficulty keeping serious, congratulated him on his

escape. The former remarked to Godfrey, "You were hardly spared that time," to which the latter replied, "I would not have been spared at all if I had not been smart enough to clear out of the way somehow," and again each looked at the other and wondered if what he heard was intended for a joke. Afterwards, when each heard the story repeated, he discovered the joke in the version of the other, and Mr. Godfrey learned to show that if he was the subject of a joke he was not an unsuspecting one, for when he listened to what Mr. Kidd had to say about his being spared, or about his quick foot-work when he escaped from the horns of the buck, he condescendingly stroked his beard and joined in the laughter which followed.

It did not take the hunters long to skin the moose and *cache* away the meat so that it would be safe from wolves and wolverines for the night. Then, after a drink of hot tea and a light lunch, they lit their pipes and started for the camp. It had taken them five hours to overtake the moose in daylight; it took them an hour and a half to get back to camp in the darkness, showing how slowly a good hunter travels when going after moose, especially when he is with companions, and how directly and quickly he can get home in the night after he has finished his day's work.

Next morning Mr. Kidd hired Panawis and his dog-train to assist the Company's man in hauling the meat of the two moose into the fort.

It took most of the day to get back to camp, and during that time the responsibility of entertaining Messrs. Kidd and Godfrey devolved upon Mrs. Panawis. The lodge was very quiet and she took occasion to remark

that such was always the case where there were no children. This was opening enough to the innocent Mr. Godfrey to ask if she had never had any. With a solemn shake of her head she answered, "No, that is one of the good things which *Kise Manitoo,* God, has never given me and my partner."

"Some wives," said Godfrey, "get so many children that they don't know what to do, and some want just one, some two and others none at all."

"*Namawiya Kwaiusk,* not right," said the squaw. "No," said Godfrey, and so ended the discussion on this extremely delicate question, for Mr. Kidd just then said to his companion, "I think, Mr. Godfrey, you will do Mrs. Panawis more good if you will borrow her axe and take her place in procuring the day's supply of fuel, and I don't mind carrying home a pole or two myself."

After their evening meal, arrangements were settled regarding the return journey to the fort, and it was decided that on account of their loads and the depth of the snow, it would be necessary to camp once on the way. Mr. Kidd asked Mrs. Panawis if she would be afraid to stay alone for three days. "Not afraid," she replied, "but I do not like it." So he proposed to the hunter that he should take his wife along, and to this proposal they both readily agreed, and everyone forthwith said nice things about having a woman in the party. Mr. Godfrey remarked, "Forty miles there and back! Pretty good stretch that for an *ookimaskwao,*" lady, at which everyone laughed, especially the lady herself. And Mr. Kidd said, "Pretty good joke, that, Godfrey," and that gentleman stroked his beard, while the expression on his face might have been taken to imply that he did not

think that there was anything the matter with the place the joke had come from.

When travelling in the North during the short wintry days, the mid-day meal is always a very hasty affair, and therefore the selection of a place and preparation for it are not always treated as important; but for the night's encampment the finest natural shelter that can be found is desirable, as well as a good supply of fuel at a convenient distance. Our party of five selected such a place for their encampment on their way to the fort, and there, like the experienced and industrious travellers that they were, they spared no pains to make themselves as comfortable a resting-place for the night as circumstances would permit.

Everyone worked like a man, including the woman. In a remarkably short time a space twelve feet across was cleared under the spreading branches of some lofty pines, snowshoes being used for the purpose somewhat after the manner of shovels. Simultaneously with this two axes were going, and dry fuel consisting of spruce, aspen, alder and willow, cut in eight-foot lengths, was piled up beside the clearing. Next one started a fire, another packed the kettles full of snow, while the others went after some spruce brush and laid it down—a carpet sweet-smelling and six inches thick—by way of shake-downs. Then by way of a barricade against drafts, small pickets were planted in the snow, heaped up behind, and then these pickets slanting towards the fire were temporarily covered with part of their bedding so as to deflect the warmth down on themselves. Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Panawis and the fort dog-driver were preparing flesh for all mouths—thirteen in number—only thawing it for the dogs; but subjecting the portions intended for

their superiors to the further process of roasting on "spits." Tea was made by melting snow in the kettles, care being taken to pack it down as it melted to prevent it being smoked. Into the water thus procured the tea was placed while the water was yet cold. The kettles were then tightly covered and again placed on the fire, and immediately the boiling point was reached, were removed. This way of making tea is excellent, and, no doubt, has been the approved method used by travellers in the North for many generations.

In keeping with conditions, two tables were set, Panawis and his wife being on one side of the fire and the three men on the other. Clean sacks served as table cloths. Both sides had sugar, salt, pepper, venison and tea; but in addition each had its special luxury: the Panawis's had some large and beautifully dried saskatoon berries and well refined marrow grease; on the men's side there were slices of plum pudding. When all was in readiness for an onslaught on the viands, Mr. Godfrey was heard to clear his throat twice, and he thus addressed the head of the party, "Mr. Kidd, don't you think that at such a feast as this we might have grace?"

"You are perfectly right," that gentleman replied, "and I shall ask you to say it, as you are the oldest here, and I know it will come naturally to you." Mr. Godfrey was perfectly prepared for the request, and clearing his throat once more, he devoutly folded his hands and said: "For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful." Then all the good things not accessible to everybody were made so by an interchange of civilities, Mr. Kidd passing over two slices of pudding to the other side, and the other side returning the compliment with a plateful of berries and grease. Thus did these five

hungry souls address themselves to the putting away of their well-earned food, the four men sitting cross-legged (the lady otherwise), while the expressions of all either verbal or facial were indicative of great satisfaction and enjoyment.

The meal being over, the fire was replenished, causing the heated pine brush to give forth a sweet scent; and when all had their pipes going, the men lay back in contentment, and with their hard-worked limbs stretched towards the fire, they watched the sparks fly upwards and disappear among the spreading branches overhead, while mingling with the crackling of their fire there sounds the pistol-like reports of the freezing trees, varied with the barking of a fox or the hooting of an owl.

When they had smoked for a few minutes in silence and contentment, Mr. Kidd said to Panawis, "I have been told that your father was one of the bravest hunters of his day, and that you sometimes accompanied him on his bear hunts. Would you mind telling us of one of your most exciting hunts?"

Thus encouraged, Panawis sat up, crossed his legs comfortably, took a look at his pipe, pressed its contents down with his thumb-nail, and after a few good pulls, delivered himself of the following story:

"My family have long been noted as bear hunters. My grandfather and father each killed about two hundred bears, and I, too, expect to reach my two hundred. My grandfather would have been killed by a bear only for my father, and my father himself, on a certain occasion, would have been killed had I not been there to help him. I killed several bears before I was a man, and after that my father often got me to go with him. When I go

bear-hunting I have no son to take with me, and perhaps for that reason I try harder than either my father or grandfather to take bears at the right time and place and in the right way."

"It was on a day in autumn that the things of which I am going to tell you happened. On the morning of that day my mother and another woman went out berrying, and were followed by one of our dogs called Clina, who was very fond of my mother. Not far from camp they came to where saskatoons were numerous, and were busily engaged in filling their birch bark rogans when they heard the dog bark, and looking in that direction they saw a huge black bear standing on its hind legs and looking at them. Usually a bear will flee at sight of human beings; but should it happen to have young close by, as it turned out this one had, it easily becomes excited and is then most dangerous. In this particular case it was the dog that started all the trouble. He excited the bear by barking at it, and when it ran towards him he ran towards the berry-pickers, who immediately fled for their lives towards the camp. My mother was the older woman, and not as swift as the other, and the bear was nearly upon her when Clina managed to get a nip at his hind leg. At this the bear wheeled round, and with a sweep of its paw tore the dog's side badly. When poor Clina howled with pain the bear seemed satisfied and went no farther.

"When my mother reached camp and had sufficiently recovered her breath to be able to tell what had happened, father turned to me and said, 'Panawis, you and I have got to get that bear.' My mother hearing him say this did her best to dissuade him; but he soothed her, saying, 'Remember *noo tookeo,* old woman, how many bears I

compelled to give up their grease to make your beautiful long hair shine, and why should it be different this time?' 'I don't know,' said mother; 'but it was an awful big one, and just see what it did to poor Clina.'

"When she saw that my father was determined to go, she said, 'Well, if you must, eat before you go,' and she prepared us some food.

"After we had seen to our guns and were ready to start, mother embraced father, saying, *'Ni-na-pem'* (my husband, 'take good care of our son'; then embracing me, she said, *'Ni-koo-sis'* (my son) 'take good care of your father.'

"When we had tracked the bear a little way we found that it was a she bear with two cubs. Then my father said, 'On account of the poor little cubs, I would spare the mother; but if she is going to stay round here, she might do us some more mischief.'

"When we had gone about as far again as where the bear was first seen, we were sure that it was very near, and as we moved along very cautiously in the direction of some fallen trees, the bear suddenly appeared behind one of them, standing up with its fore paws against the tree. My father at once raised his gun and sent a ball into its chest. It then disappeared, but when we went around the tree to find out what had happened, it sprang up and rushed at us with such great speed that the muzzle of father's gun was nearly touching its head when he fired his second shot. Unfortunately the ball glanced and the next instant the bear had my father on the ground. Stepping up so that the muzzle of my single barrel gun nearly touched the bear, I sent a ball into its heart; but a bear once excited is an awful creature, and even then

it continued worrying my father, so I drew my knife and plunged it into its back. Fortunately at that moment its strength gave out and it rolled over, dead. Then it was that I noticed an almost unbelievable thing—my father's knife was sticking into the bear's belly right up to the handle, showing that however quick the bear had been with her hands, she had been no quicker than my father, who, the instant he fell, drew his knife from its sheath and plunged it into the bear.

"Though bleeding badly from face and shoulder, he was able to sit up and tell me what to do for his wounds. First he pointed to some colt's-foot leaves. Then he told me to tear up a part of his shirt for bandages, but I used mine instead. He then reached for a little medicine bag he always carried attached to his belt when he went hunting. Selecting a powder, he asked me to press the edges of his wound together and then to sprinkle them freely with the powder, and after laying on small strips of colt's-foot, to bandage the whole securely as I could.

"My father was a strong man, and we reached camp without resting once on the way. My mother was very much put out when she saw what we looked like. As she was dressing father's wounds and putting on some more of the wonderful powder, she said, 'I told you it was a bad bear.' To this father said, 'It was a good bear; it fought for its children just as you would for yours, and had it not been for that Clina of yours she might have left us alone.'

"Next day I went after the meat of the bear, taking two dogs to help me carry it. I found the cubs near the body of their mother. The dogs chased them up a tree and I left them there.

"In the course of two months my father was well as ever; but the left side of his face was always slightly disfigured. Mother, however, comforted him by telling him that she would always look upon the good side, and that way he would remain to her as good as the day he had first become her man."

Mr. Kidd said, "That was a well-told story of a brave hunt, and your father must have been not only brave but fair-minded, since, even while smarting under the wounds that *musqua* (the bear) had given him, he did not fail to do her justice. But about your mother; did she ever blame her dog for the trouble he had started?"

"No, indeed. She treated him more kindly, and in fact, all dogs, ever after that. When he got back to camp the time he was hurt, and she examined the great gash across his side, she put her hand on his head, and looking into his eyes with tears in her own, she said, 'Poor Clina! You were willing to give your life to save mine, and I am never going to forget it.' "

A short pause occurred here, during which Mr. Godfrey several times cleared his throat, a regular habit of his when about to speak, and intended, perhaps, to convey the impression that he was about to say something worth while. On this occasion the throat-clearing process was followed by the remark, "I am no bear-hunter; but all the same I have killed one bear in my life."

"Tell us about it," said Panawis, "and the others also expressed a wish to hear the story, hoping perhaps that it would be something like that of his moose-hunt of two days before. The sum and substance of this second bear story was, however, only this, (1) that Mr. Godfrey ten years previously in the Red River Settlement had gone

bear-hunting with three large dogs, (2) that the three large dogs had found and treed a bear (very large of course), (3) that Mr. Godfrey took aim at the bear, sent a ball into its brain and brought it down to earth.

At the start the story was extremely monotonous; but Mr. Kidd very soon changed all that, by bringing out the salient points in the story which have already been given, doing so by means of tactful and humorous questions and remarks which caused considerable amusement, in which Mr. Godfrey himself joined, no doubt arguing to himself that even if he did not always see the joke, he at any rate deserved credit for furnishing the material out of which it was made.

After these stories the travellers made their beds and turned in very much as they stood, for the greatest sticklers for hygienics on such occasions are obliged temporarily to give the conge to cleanliness and ventilation theories; and the members of this party, in order to better conserve the warmth of their bodies, lay down spoon-fashion together, three and two together, and contracting themselves end-wise so as to get heads and feet more completely under cover, lay still until morning, when all declared that they had enjoyed the rest.

That evening the hunters arrived at the fort with their welcome loads of fresh venison, bringing also fresh topics of conversation to interest them for many days to come.

The Red River packet arrived at Fort Liard in the middle of February and brought letters for everyone except the children. Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd each had among his letters one to which he had looked forward with fond expectation. As may be supposed, the one for Mr. Findlay came from Miss Nellie Blain. All romancing

aside, it was a letter which only a person of good ability and loving disposition could have written. It clearly followed the style of love-making which, without any agreement, they had adopted.

Perhaps to these two young people, separated by thousands of miles, and only able to do their courting on paper with ink and pen, it seemed better that they should do so under the guise of friendship, by way of a self-imposed penance for having at one time loved dividedly.

And so, in the letter just referred to, Miss Blain did not tell Mr. Findlay in so many words that she loved him, but she compensated herself for that by declaring her friendship for him in the superlative degree. She began her letter by calling him her "very, very dearest friend" and finished off with the pertinent admission—"as in former days, so now, and for ever and ever, your own very dearest friend."

"Stuff!" did I hear someone say? Well the lone exile at Fort Liard did not put it quite that way. When he read these natural ebullitions of a loving heart, he smiled, rubbed his hands together, and said, "Great stuff, that!"

Miss Blain's letter was lengthy, but every item of news it contained was like "cold water to a thirsty soul." Besides matters private and personal, it contained a clever, off-hand write-up of the current news of the Red River Settlement, and was not confined to social events, but contained information on civil and religious matters as well, all written in a style which caused him to wonder what his mental condition could have been when he turned down such a girl on account of someone else.

In addition to her letter, Miss Blain sent a bundle of newspaper clippings mostly from the pioneer paper of

Red River, the "Nor'-Wester." These were assorted into as many parts as would extend over the remainder of the winter by taking one each day. "In this way," she wrote her lover, "you may, while enjoying your evening pipe, also enjoy your daily paper, which you might name "The Liard Courier." Mr. Findlay called it that when reading it to the men of the fort; but Mr. Kidd called it the "Angelic Device," meaning thereby a device to fool the devil, *Kuskeyihten*; and it certainly turned out a splendid device for keeping them all in touch with civilization and for spending the evenings pleasantly and profitably.

With the opening of navigation Mr. Findlay returned to Fort Simpson with one of the largest returns in furs that had ever been made from Fort Liard; and Mr. Bayard, who did not forget the years when he had been a struggling clerk, heartily congratulated him upon his early success as a trader, and expressed genuine regret that he was not to remain longer in the MacKenzie River district.

After a few days at Fort Simpson, Mr. Findlay resumed his journey, going southward with the MacKenzie brigade as far as Fort Chipewyan. There he rejoined his old friend and fellow-clerk, Mr. John Thomson, and together they awaited the arrival of the boats from the south, aboard which it was expected Mr. and Mrs. Donald and Miss Blain would arrive. There we shall leave them while we record the doings of the Rev. Charles Snow, who the year before had been their companion and mess-mate from Fort Garry to this point, and remained so associated with Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd as far as Fort Simpson, whence these two gentlemen, as related, went up the Liard, while Mr. Snow went down the MacKenzie to engage in missionary work in the remote North.

CHAPTER SIX

Mr. Snow's First Winter in the North

The remainder of the brigade with which Mr. Snow continued his voyage northward consisted of three boats, and these were manned chiefly by men of the Slavic and Tukudh tribes. The country of the former surrounds Great Slave Lake, and extends down the MacKenzie some distance north of Fort Norman. Thence lies the country of the Tukudh, which extends down the MacKenzie as far as Forts McPherson and Lapierre House, which are the main trading places for this tribe. Beyond this, still northward, lies the country of the Eskimo.

The following were the officers and missionaries who embarked at Fort Simpson: Rev. Mr. Snow; Mr. Laronde, officer in charge at Fort Norman; Mr. T. Marston, officer in charge at Fort Good Hope; Rev. Père Vital, a Roman Catholic priest, who was to winter at Fort Norman; Mr. James Winters, officer in charge at Fort McPherson; Mr. Thomas Brown, officer in charge at Lapierre House.

The usual style of travelling down the MacKenzie was adopted—the boats travelled apart by day but were fastened together by night. Three times a day a landing was made long enough to "boil the kettle," and sometimes to do a little hasty cooking.

Mr. Winters was head officer in the brigade and extended hospitality to the missionaries by inviting them to join the officers' mess, which was served in the sternsheets of his boat.

In its dealings with the missionaries of the two churches the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company was admirably non-partisan, and the dignified and tactful manner in which representative officials such as Mr. Winters carried out the policy, gave unprejudiced observers the impression that they were more liberal minded than the missionaries themselves. The presence of a priest and an Anglican missionary at the officers' mess on this journey was no uncommon situation in the North; and as Mr. Winters well knew, called for very careful handling; so at the first meal he called upon the priest to ask a blessing and on Mr. Snow to return thanks; but the next time he varied this order by asking Mr. Snow to ask a blessing and the priest to return thanks. It was a little awkward, however, when one morning he forgot who had asked a blessing the evening before, and no one was disposed to say. This incident created a little amusement, but no unpleasantness, and at the earnest request of the priest, who was a good man and a thorough gentleman, it was arranged that in future his part would be to return thanks. When Mr. Winters thanked him for so pleasantly settling the matter, he replied, "I am sure, Mr. Winters, that Mr. Snow, like myself, has come to this country to do greater things than say grace, and so long as we are intent on honouring Him in Whose service we have both come to this country, never fear that we shall make trouble over a little matter of this kind."

Mr. Brown, who was a young Scotsman, said, "I think you are very wise, Père, to settle these little difficulties in such an easy and pleasant way; but I suppose when it comes to more serious ones you have to say, as we sometimes do in the fur trade—'Competition is the life of trade.'"

Mr. Snow said, "I am only arriving in the country; but already I have had that motto quoted for my benefit. I would like to have your opinion, Mr. Winters, as to the results of such missionary work as has been carried on in the North, and the manner in which it has been affected by the divisions referred to. You have lived longer in the North than any of us; then you are a layman, and a Presbyterian at that, so that your position, unlike that of the Père and myself, may be called non-official, and leaves you more free to say just what you think."

The others having heartily joined in this request, Mr. Winters said, "And so I find myself let in for a *'discoorse,'* which it would seem I owe to my unfortunate lapse of memory in the matter of grace. Well, gentlemen, I shall be brief. My text is from Brown's gospel—'Competition is the life of trade.' We are certainly familiar with this proverb in our business of the fur trade, although it cannot be said that in practice it has worked out to the satisfaction of the Hudson's Bay Company. Take for instance, the effects of the competition in the Peace River country, in regard to which I have no hesitation in saying that if it is carried on for an entire century as it has been for the past two decades, it will not only be the death of the trade, but of one or more of the Indian tribes as well. We know what happened to the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies when they were in competition for the trade of this country. Competition so nearly ruined the business of both that at length they deemed it wise to unite.

"Having thus approached the question of missionary work in the North upon which you have asked my opinion, I am pleased to be able to say that the results, taken as a whole, have been beneficial to the natives and

to the Company's people as well; but that, in certain localities any good done has been pretty well offset by the harm resulting from opposition, that is, contradictory teaching by two or more missionaries. The right name for such a condition of things is not competition but division. In conclusion permit me to quote the highest authority we have as to the effects of division—'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.' I ask unofficially, and I trust unofficiously, if, after that, we are free to infer that the church may be divided against itself without interfering with the fulfilment of the promise that 'the gates of hell would not prevail against it?' "

By this time the boats were close together, and the missionaries, after thanking Mr. Winters for his instructive remarks, arose and moved over to their respective boats.

That same evening, when the boats were once more fastened together and were being borne along by the current, the conversation again took a religious turn; but this time it might be said that the speakers trod on thicker ice, as they did not discuss the Christian religion in particular, but religion as found to exist among the native tribes when the Whites first came among them.

This was a subject on which Père Vital was particularly well versed, as he was not only familiar with the records of the Jesuit Fathers, but had made investigations on his own account since taking up work in the North, with the result that he was led to concur in the conclusion which others had arrived at who had made a study of the question. And those conclusions were to the effect that the natives had from the first a firm belief in the existence of at least one great spirit, to whom a name

was applied or allusion made according to the language or peculiar ideas of each tribe. Their conception of this great spirit was that of a being terrible in power, and in keeping with this belief they greatly feared him, attributing their hardships, particularly starvation and disease, to his displeasure. Strange to say, they all fell short of that worthy conception of God—that of a Being who is loving and lovable.

Mr. Winters said, "I am sure Père Vital, that your deductions are correct, although I have a strong suspicion that some of the things we are told about the original beliefs of one or other of the Indian tribes are pure inventions of a story-teller either Red or White. The one thing that appeals to me as a proof that the Indians of old believed in a world of spirits, is the fact that this belief has been perpetuated by a succession of conjurors and medicine men. These men—call them what you like—are no modern inventors or inventions, and they are no adjuncts of civilization; but they present to us the spectacle of men groping in the dark, just as we know their predecessors did 'in the dark shades of ancient days' many centuries ago."

The question now came under discussion as to whether these Indian conjurors did really hold communication with spirits of some place unknown. Mr. Brown was of the opinion that they did, "And more than that," said he, "I don't think the spirits can be any worse than some of the embodied ones with whom we have to do here on earth."

Mr. Winters said, "Mr. Brown reminds me of the Irishman who found it hard to say, 'I renounce the devil' because he said he found it paid to be good friends with

everybody, even 'furiners.' However, I am disposed to agree with Mr. Brown in the opinion that some Indian conjurors do hold communication with invisible beings; but I would not venture any opinion as to the character of these foreigners. Perhaps one of these days scientists will discover astounding principles or laws in the natural world which will practically annihilate distance, and render easy of explanation telepathy, spiritualism and other present-day puzzles. And perhaps this wonderful knowledge will be merely a discovery of the vehicle of communication between the present and the absent which the Indian conjuror had stumbled across it may be thousands of years before, which, as used by him in his simplicity was a proof to the members of his tribe that there is a *Munitoo* (God) and the scientist will doubtless arrive at the same conclusion after he has carried out his investigations to the inevitable finish. But I dare say a good conjuring story would be more interesting than these speculations of mine. Mr. Laronde, would you mind telling us that story of the conjuring performance which you witnessed on the Peace River?"

Mr. Laronde was one of the senior officers in the service, a very quiet man and much respected. Finding that the others were thoroughly interested, he complied with Mr. Winters' request and told the following story.

"This happened at Fort Dunvegan when Mr. Baynon was in charge, and I as a young clerk, was his assistant. At the time of my story I was temporarily in charge, as Mr. Baynon had accompanied the brigade on the annual trip to York Factory. When autumn came, I studied the journals with much interest. It had once happened that the boats had frozen in before reaching the fort, and as the day drew near on which this had happened, there

was considerable uneasiness, particularly as there were unmistakable signs of winter being near. The Indians by this time were all in and were growing anxious to get their winter supplies. You know how quickly Indians take a despondent view of things, and a hundred times a day you would hear *intaodetla* or *ayimun*, the Beaver and Cree respectively for *hard* and *difficult*. At length this sort of thing became unbearable to Mrs. Baynon, and there being at this time a noted conjuror, a Salteaux by the name of *Mamaskach, the wonderful*, she asked me to bargain with him for ten skins of information about Mr. Baynon and the brigade. This man was believed to be capable of doing extraordinary things, and the general opinion as to the source of his power was that it came from below and not from above. The scamp took no chances, and had to be paid in advance. His charge of ten M. B. was reasonable enough, considering that he had to build a special lodge. The poles for this structure were of good size and well sunk into the ground and fastened securely at the top. The covering, like that of an ordinary lodge, was made of dressed moose hide. The next thing was to bind the conjuror hand and foot. This seemed to me to be done very thoroughly, and when I looked down on Mamaskach lying in an entangled heap in the centre of the tent, with nothing near him except his drum and medicine bag, his case looked to me to present a knotty problem whose unravelling would need the help of some intelligent beings with good strong fingers; and before I backed out and stood guard at the door I took particular care to see that there was no chance of anyone being concealed within the tent.

"For some minutes nothing happened, except that I could occasionally hear something like a grunt as though

Mamaskach was having trouble with the ropes; but very soon he furnished conclusive evidence that he had released himself or had been released, and the noises issuing from within sounded as if he was having company. If he made all those noises unaided, he was, in that respect alone, an extraordinary mortal; for there seemed to be going on simultaneously, drumming, whistling, rattling, singing and shouting, and at the same time the tent was shaking as if afflicted with St. Vitus' dance. Then in the midst of it, out flew the ropes with which he had been bound, from the opening at the top of the tent, After this there was silence for a few minutes, and then Mamaskach, speaking in his natural voice, seemed to be describing a scene which was before him. He said, 'I see the three boats coming round the first point on this side of Smoky River. In the sternsheets of the first one sits Mr. Baynon and a young man whom I have never seen before. He looks like a clerk. In the second boat there is someone who is dressed like a priest, and in the last boat there is a woman and two small children. There is no ice on the river. The men are tracking, and someone must have killed a moose, for I see fresh meat in the boats.'

"The conjuror's picture turned out true in every particular. At five p.m., the hour at which he was conjuring, the boats were rounding the first point west of Smoky River, and everything was just as he described, even to the meat, for that morning a moose, taking an early morning walk along the river, had been shot by one of the men."

We now return to the MacKenzie River brigade. Early in the afternoon of the third day after leaving Fort Simpson, it arrived at Fort Norman and for social rather than business reasons, instead of floating onward the

same night, remained there until the following morning, for even at Fort Norman the amenities of life had to be respected, and the kindness and good-will which find a place in the bosoms of people the world over were in evidence here, too, and seemed to have gained rather than lost from contact with cold and isolation.

One boat's crew made up of Slavies was to remain here, while two made up of Tukudh were to continue onward, but though these voyageurs were of different tribes, they were of one family—the human family, and there was going to be a wedding in the family, and a general invitation to the wedding was generally accepted. They were all willing to rejoice with those who rejoiced.

In the fort was a Tukudh girl named Maria, who two years before had accompanied Mrs. Laronde from Fort Good Hope, as her maid. Maria was a pupil of Rev. Mr. Browning, Anglican missionary at Fort McPherson, and James Balder, the young Tukudh Maria was marrying, came from the same place and was also one of Mr. Browning's converts. When going up-stream in spring Jim had made good use of the short stay at Fort Norman, and with the assistance of Maria had made the old home ties much more binding, for when Maria had pensively told her friend that she was "thinking long," and would like to dwell among her own people, Jim told her he knew of an easy way in which that could be managed, and when she with assumed innocence asked, "How?" he put the solemn question then and there—"Will you be my wife?" And she, instead of saying, "Oh Jim! This is so sudden!" said "Yes," and thus it came about that there was to be another marriage in the human family.

Maria, being an unselfish girl, she had to share her joy with somebody, and at once told the news to her

mistress. Kind-hearted Mrs. Laronde was not taken by surprise. Experienced matrons are not easily surprised in matters of this kind, so she kissed her Indian maid and said, "I knew it was coming: may *le Bon Dieu* give you much happiness." But she did not leave it all to le Bon Dieu, for she there and then rejoiced the heart of Maria by telling her of the nice little dowry that Mr. Laronde and she had always planned giving her on the day of her marriage.

Weddings in the North were usually quiet affairs, and when a hired man got married he was likely a man above the common if the officer in charge at the fort where the event occurred took part in celebrating it. However, as the groom in this case had been a faithful factotum to more than one officer, and the bride had been the trusted servant of an officer's wife, it was felt that in this instance it would be quite in order for the Company's officers to take a conspicuous part in the proceedings; accordingly Mr. Laronde did not consider it derogatory to his position to act as proxy for Maria's father by giving her away, and Mrs. Laronde on her part was pleased to have her eldest daughter, who was twelve years of age, act as bridesmaid, while Mr. Brown, not to be outdone, supported the groom. With respect to Père Vital, be it said to his everlasting credit, that he, too, was present, swayed—may we not believe—by the spirit of love which rules supreme in the High Church designed for use of the human family, wherein separating mountains of mortal accretion are converted into mole hills which any child of faith may cast into the sea.

After this pleasant delay at Fort Norman, the brigade resumed the voyage next morning, minus a boat and its crew, plus one woman. All day the boats kept in the

centre of the immense river and were alternately propelled by oar and current or by current only; but as the sun drew near the horizon a landing was made, and in a little while kettlesful of hot tea were being carried aboard; then the men, resuming their oars, pulled some distance from shore, and there laying down their oars they placed two of them crosswise, and bound the boats securely together for the night. Then as the sun said good-night to the pilgrims, while its departing rays were still touching up the gorgeous autumn foliage which surmounted the banks of the river, the men sat down in groups of three or four and partook of their evening meal. And when that was over they placed themselves in all manner of postures which promised most comfort, and chatted together while they smoked the last pipe of the day. Gradually the shades of night grow darker. Quietly and swiftly the current of the mighty MacKenzie carries them oceanward while the western bank with its trees and hills is mirrored on the surface of the river. O'er head from the dusky vault there twinkle the innumerable starry worlds, which ever inspire in the minds of men and women, thoughts inexpressible of illimitable and unknown glories.

Breaking a silence than which no speech could have been more eloquent, Mr. Winters said, "We were speaking about grand cathedrals today. Tonight we behold the grandest of them all."

"And will you please furnish the music," added Mr. Brown, reaching for Mr. Winters' violin as he spoke; and Mr. Snow having seconded the request with a hearty "do, please!" Mr. Winters took the instrument, which, for an amateur, he could play with wonderful expression. After tuning it, he asked the Tukudh in their language

what hymn they would like to sing, and the Christian Leader among them answered in their language, "Nearer My God to Thee." This hymn they sang heartily and in good time, and the violin and the one woman's voice blended in nicely with the voices of the men. Then the Christian Leader and his fellow countrymen said together a short prayer and the Lord's Prayer in their language, following which Mr. Snow said a short prayer and the grace in English; and so closed this unique cathedral service.

Some days later, on arrival at Fort McPherson, and within an hour of that event, a remark made by Mr. Snow was characteristic of the man. Here he was just off a three months' journey which some have called arduous, and on the way he had ministered to the sick, held many religious services, baptized a score of infants and united half that number of adults in the holy state of matrimony. He had been diligently studying several of the Indian languages, and had read his Greek Testament from cover to cover, and after all this he speaks as a man might be expected to do who has just come off a pleasure jaunt—he says to Mr. Browning—"Now I must get to work and do something." He was fresh from a comfortable home in England where often he had sung the words with fervour:

"Waft, waft ye winds the story,
And you, ye waters roll,
Till like a sea of glory
It spreads from pole to pole."

And now he is under constraint to tell that story to the inhabitants who are nearest the pole in the western hemisphere. His objective was the land of the Eskimo. He had grasped the thought of what this world would

become if the story of Divine love was faithfully proclaimed everywhere, and the thought of being able to render service to that end appealed to him as a privilege and a duty.

As he was so new to the country both Mr. Browning and Mr. Winters tried to persuade him to defer his sojourn with the Eskimo for a year, or at least for six months; but all to no purpose, and when a party of Eskimo visited the fort to procure winter supplies, he returned with them to their camp.

The Eskimo of these parts were at that time treacherous and thievish, and while as a matter of policy they had to be careful of how they treated the Hudson's Bay Company, they were very liable to take advantage of a stranger, even if he were a missionary. Knowing this, Mr. Winters gave Mr. Snow the chance of dealing with the Eskimo Chief through the Hudson's Bay Company, an offer which he thankfully accepted. According to this agreement the chief was to convey Mr. Snow and his few belongings to the Eskimo camp, to provide for his wants during winter and fetch him safely back to the fort by canoe as early in the spring as the river was clear of ice. In return for this he was to receive from the Company's store so many made beaver—one-third before leaving for his camp, one-third at Christmas, and the remainder in spring.

Fortunately, there never lived the man who was more easily satisfied than the Rev. Mr. Snow, and he was in his prime and of a robust constitution; and allow that the board and lodging may have been indescribable, he complained not, and when Mr. Browning and Mr. Winters asked him upon his return how he fared, he replied in

the words he invariably used on such occasions: "Thank you. I had a nice quiet time."

Often afterwards inquisitive people tried to have him describe the domestic conditions existing in an ordinary "igloo"—wanted to know if it were true that the condition in which they entered their sleeping bags was the same as that in which they had entered the world, also, how of a biting, wintry morning the reverse transition could be at all possible. But he steadfastly from the first discountenanced any such curiosity, probably considering it contrary to the best traditions of a gentleman to make free reference to what he had seen in homes where he had been courteously and hospitably received, and none the less so where environment made it incumbent upon his entertainers to do things in an extremely simple and natural manner. However, while curious questions about the private manners of the Eskimo failed to elicit a revelation from Mr. Snow, they afforded him the opportunity, of which he never failed to take advantage, of remarking that though living in a severe climate, a beneficent Providence had enabled them (not necessarily him) to live in comfort and on the fat of the land.

Upon his return to Fort McPherson, Mr. Snow took charge of the Mission for three months, so as to leave Mr. Browning free to make extended visits to a number of Indian camps.

On his return they conjointly hired an Indian and his birch bark canoe for a journey up-stream to Fort Simpson, for however interested the Company's officers and the missionaries might be in the duties of their respective callings, after a year of isolation, a visit to the district fort, if duty would permit, was sure to be in line with

inclination, especially in autumn when the brigade was expected from the south, and would bring news of one's distant friends; and there would also be opportunity to enjoy for at least a little while the stimulus and inspiration which is to be found in companionship with kindred souls.

To the missionary of the North, who in his travels oft has occasion to make use of the great MacKenzie River or one or other of its main tributaries, there was always at hand a striking metaphor, for they presented in their never-ceasing flow an apt figure of the passing of time, which, so far as the temporal life of the individual man extends, so soon merges into the fathomless ocean of eternity; but for the more practical purposes of life the finest metaphor lies up-stream, for he who is paddling his canoe in that direction against the opposing force that is ever threatening to drag him backwards, soon has the lesson driven home that, if there is to be good progress and a perfect end, there must be constant watchfulness and unflagging effort.

The two missionaries worked the same as their man. The tracking line was used most of the time; but occasionally all three paddled. The fly season was not quite over but the travellers protected their faces during the day with mosquito netting, and at night they smoked the last mosquito out of their tent and then closed it so tightly that no more could enter.

One night after having taken these precautions to ensure a comfortable night's rest, they discussed the social standing in the country of the Hudson's Bay Company officers, and also of the missionaries. It was noted that in any of the Indian languages the missionary was

referred to as "a praying man," and if a bishop, as "a big praying man"; that a clerk in the Company's service was "a little master," a commissioned officer was "a master," or if governor or in charge of a district he was "a big master." It was also noted that Mr. Bayard would be spoken of in English as "district manager," in French as "le bourgeois," in Cree as "*kihchi* (big) *ookimao*," in Chipewyan as "*bagothara chok*," in Beaver as "*meoti chok*," and so with the other tribes, all applying the distinctive word, *big*.

"And what is your opinion as to all this bigness?" asked Mr. Snow.

"As a partial answer to that question let me quote from the book of Proverbs: 'The poor is hated even by his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends,' although in applying the proverb in the North or anywhere else, character counts for much, and so far as my knowledge goes, the case would be exceptional indeed, of a leading Company officer being honoured more on account of the position which he filled than because of the honourable manner in which he filled it. When the Indian calls him big master, he is in all honesty giving honour to whom honour is due."

"And now," said Mr. Snow, "by way of turning the searchlight on ourselves, may I ask, why should we not have as great influence over the Indians as the big masters themselves? If we filled our positions as faithfully as they fill theirs, would it not be so?"

Mr. Browning replied, "No doubt it is wholesome occasionally to bring the matter home to our consciences by asking these plain questions; but a comparison between the calling of the Company's officers and our own

is not easily made, inasmuch as theirs is secular and ours religious, and their circumstances admit of their living as gentlemen who are not under the necessity of doing manual labour, while with ourselves it is quite different, and we know how apt people are to confound manual labour with menial labour, and to look down on those who do such things. And can we wonder at it? For if we ourselves see one of our fellow-missionaries plastered up with mud while engaged in plastering his house, we know that instead of thereby commending himself to our admiration he rather furnishes occasion for the thought that such earthiness is hardly compatible with his heavenly calling."

This discussion was continued a little longer and when it ended the two were in perfect concord in the opinion that when a missionary was endued with a right judgment and thoroughly devoted to his calling, he would so subordinate the lower things to the higher, that his manual labour, such as cooking, gardening and carpentering would become unsecularized in his conscience and in the sight of all with whom he had to do, and in that way neither he nor his work would suffer.

The missionaries arrived at Fort Norman next evening, where they accepted the invitation of the Larondes and stayed overnight. There they again met Père Vital, who was sincerely pleased to see them, and their words and manner made it very clear to him that the pleasure was mutual. When informed by him that owing to failing health he would shortly be leaving the North, they so feelingly expressed their sympathy that he was quite moved.

At the tea table enquiries were made about Maria, and when these had been answered, Mrs. Laronde said:

"Maria was always one good girl, and I was very sorry when she go and get married; but very nearly all good girl do dat wen de right man come along." Mr. Laronde was a very quiet man, but he was French, and he bowed towards his spouse and said, "Merci, Madame," and everyone laughed heartily, because being such a quiet man the remark was so utterly unexpected.

Next morning the missionaries resumed their journey, bearing with them substantial tokens of the kindness of their host and hostess. They were accompanied to their canoe by every member of the little establishment, and there hearty hand-shaking and "bonjour, monsieur," or "bonjour, madame" took place, and finally when the three travellers were seated and were raising their paddles for the first dip, the little group ashore, led by the generous-minded priest, helped them forward on their way by shouting "bon voyage."

The usual meal on this voyage consisted of dried caribou meat—in the localism of the district, called "dog-ribs" owing to its appearance—and a small quantity of bannock; but for a little while after leaving Fort Norman, thanks to the generosity of the Larondes, they ate potatoes with their dog-ribs and raspberry jam with their bannock, and while doing so they remembered the channels through which these extras had come, and such expressions were to be heard as "the spirit that quickeneth," "the milk of human kindness," "practical religion," and so forth.

Making an average distance daily of thirty miles, they reached Fort Simpson a week ahead of the boats from the south. During their stay at the place they were the guests of the Rev. and Mrs. Oakly, with whom they had

a most enjoyable visit. Mr. Oakly had been in charge of the Anglican Mission here for some years.

When that great event—the arrival of the brigade—at length occurred, the quietness which had prevailed gave place to a bustling activity which bore a slight resemblance to life in the city. Everyone seemed to feel that it was his or her chance to see a little of life and have a good time. The old-timers especially acted as if bound to compress as much enjoyment into the few days they were having with their friends as would last them till next year, when they might hope to come back and meet again.

Among the newcomers was an Anglican missionary fresh from England, two young Hudson's Bay clerks equally new to the country, of whom one was English and the other Scottish. Then there were the old-timers, Mr. and Mrs. Donald, with their protege, Miss Nellie Blain.

A young lady arriving in the North for a visit, or for any other reason, immediately became an object of great interest, especially among the eligible male population, not necessarily because she might be attractive, but just as likely because she was the only marriageable, educated white girl in the North. Think, then, of the stir created by the arrival of an unquestionably attractive young lady who had spoken and sung and laughed herself into favour with the boats' crews and people generally, all the way from Fort Garry to Fort Simpson. It was not to be wondered at that her name was on everybody's lips, and that more than one young gentleman in the country hoped that she would not long waste her companionship on a lady, and that whenever she decided on a change it might be his good fortune to be her choice. But as far as Fort Simpson was concerned, Mr. Bayard saw to it that his

young lieutenants kept the rule against allowing private feelings to stand in the way of public duty, and all too soon when there ceased to be any more good business reasons why the pleasant assembling of themselves together should continue, Fort Simpson with all its attractions had to be left behind, and the Company's officers and the missionaries dispersed to their respective appointments—Mr. Donald accompanied by Mrs. Donald and Miss Blain, to resume charge at Fort Liard, Mr. Browning to continue his work at Forts McPherson and La Pierre House, and Mr. Snow—ever on the look-out for an open door—continued his journey up the MacKenzie River, and after putting in a winter at the three Hudson's Bay posts on Great Slave Lake, viz., Hay River, Resolution and Rae, went on southward to Fort Chipewyan in the following summer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Wedding and a Honeymoon Voyage

Having described the gathering at Fort Simpson at which Miss Blain, the chief heroine of our story, was present, we now turn our thoughts to Fort Chipewyan, the district fort through which she had passed a few months previously, and where she and Mrs. Donald had received even more attention than a little later was shown them at Fort Simpson; the explanation for this being contained in the fact that at the former place she had met her old admirer, Mr. Thomson, and also her great friend, Mr. Findlay, who, as previously stated, had descended the Liard in spring, and joining the south-going brigade at Fort Simpson, had gone on with it as far as Fort Chipewyan.

The meeting, to these three, was very interesting, and, in fact, to Mr. Thomson it was exciting, for knowing now a little more of the relations between Mr. Findlay and Miss Blain, he was perturbed at the recollection of his former intentions towards the latter; and Miss Blain may have been a little excited too, as she remembered what had happened to these two gentlemen, and with her charming face aglow with pleasure she shook hands with them, saying, "Oh, how good to see you both again!"

The brigade from the south arrived at ten a.m., and did not leave until mid-afternoon. At twelve-thirty the officers and ladies had met by invitation at the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Churchill, where they enjoyed a sumptuous luncheon.

By that time Mr. Findlay and Miss Blain had become more drawn to each other than ever, in fact they had been drawn together in an embrace—the sequel to a long and interesting conversation by which they had arrived at a definite understanding.

They had been for a walk—and there are few places on this earth that can excel Fort Chipewyan in providing a lovers' walk. Mr. Findlay chose for himself and his friend, one that led in a north-east direction over a succession of rocks with a gradual ascent, so that when they had walked about a quarter of a mile they were some hundreds of feet above the fort. These rocks were smooth and partly bare, except for a covering, in most places, of lichen and creeping fir; while in other places the detritus washing down these rocks and accumulating in crevices and hollows, had enabled a number of jack pine (cypres) to take root and flourish. Standing under the inviting shelter of one of these cypres, the friends turned their faces southward to view the scenery, which at once drew from Miss Blain the exclamation, "Oh, how beautiful!"

Before them on the gentle slope from the lake shore, was the fort, with its whitewashed houses built in the form of a square of which one side extended westward in a row of smaller buildings comprising the dwelling houses of the hired men. A little beyond the last house in this row was a sandy point, covered with shrubs. Beyond this point was a bay which curved northward and was about half a mile in width, on whose farther side stood a well-equipped Roman Catholic Mission, beyond which the shore of the bay terminated in a bold point or bluff. Between this bluff and some islands not far to the south and east, the Athabasca Lake narrowed down to river-

like dimensions before joining the Great Slave and Quatre Fourches Rivers. In the islands referred to there was something suggestive of design, for they were in a row and about equidistant one from the other. All were of a rich green and all were dome-shaped. And beyond the island was the lake's farther shore, its bush because of greater distance showing dark in contrast to that of the islands, and growing darker and lower as the lake grew wider and receded eastward, until somewhere beyond the mouth of the Athabasca River, it dwindled down to a mere dark blue line which finally ended in a number of specks, until the water and sky met and had it all to themselves.

With a face expressive of admiration, Miss Blain exclaimed for at least the third time, "Oh, isn't that beautiful!"

"Well," said Mr. Findlay, "it did look beautiful, when yesterday and on previous days I stood here watching for your boat to appear at the mouth of the Athabasca River; but now that you are here if my subconscious mind chooses to subsist on scenery, well and good; but the conscious ego has found something more satisfying, and you are it, my dearest dear: so as we have but a few hours together, don't you think we had better get on better terms before we part?"

"Why, William, what better terms can there be than 'dear friends?' "

"My dear Nellie, there is a relationship far sweeter and more soul-satisfying."

"Oh! What may that be?"

"Oh thou unsophisticated little dove."

By this time they were both laughing very heartily, and at the suggestion of the man they sat down. Then a red squirrel which had gone up a tree to hang a toadstool for future use looked down on them and scolded, while they, forgetting the things that were behind, looked bravely and hopefully towards the future.

"You dear little thing," said the maiden looking at the squirrel.

"You dear little thing," said the man, pointing at the maiden, and like unsophisticated children they laughed again.

Then said the man, "Nellie, so far as I am concerned, the 'dear friend' camouflage business is a thing of the past. 'Barkis is willin' and you are not merely my dear friend—you are my love. But no doubt this is not a matter to be taken in hand lightly, so I ask you in all seriousness, will you make me a very happy man by consenting to be my wife?"

With that modesty which every pure maiden must feel when a man asks her to become his bosom companion for life, her face was involuntarily diverted for a moment, and then with eyes which looked bravely into his own she said with a smile and with trembling voice, "Yes."

All married people will have had the experience which will enable them to know what would next happen after this stage in the direction of matrimony had been reached; and those who intend to marry, if ever they reach this stage, will likely then know instinctively what they ought to do. Suffice it therefore to remark here that the pleasant informalities connected with "getting engaged" were duly observed and sealed according to the

usages which have been in vogue for generations and which will likely continue until the end of time.

That afternoon the engagement of Mr. Findlay and Miss Blain was announced, and Mr. Churchill and Mr. Donald conjointly arranged matters so that their wish to marry in a year's time might be carried out without conflicting with the interests of the Company, or interfering with plans already made. Accordingly Mr. Findlay was to be placed in charge of Fort Dunvegan, and Miss Blain, after spending the winter at Fort Liard, was to return to Fort Chipewyan in spring, availing herself of an opportunity of doing so by accompanying Mrs. Bayard, who would be passing Fort Chipewyan on her way south for a visit to the Red River Settlement. Mr. Findlay was to await his intended at Fort Chipewyan, and there they were to be married.

Among the crews of the four boats which went up the Peace River in Mr. Findlay's charge, and also the brigade which went southward in Mr. Donald's charge, there were a number of men from St. Andrew's parish, Red River Settlement, who were well acquainted with the Findlay and Blain families, and who being proud to claim the popular William Findlay and Nellie Blain as fellow-citizens of theirs, were ever ready to sound their praises in the hearing of their associates, and sometimes—accidentally it may be—the subjects of their eulogies would hear what was said. For instance, one night Mr. Findlay lying awake in his tent, overheard the following remarks about his lady-love: "She is not one bit stuck-up; she was the prettiest girl in the Red River Settlement; she is the nicest young lady that has ever visited the North." As to the nicest young lady, she also heard pleasant things about her intended. One day a steersman who made

sure of there being no officer within hearing, informed all others who cared to know that "Mr. Findlay was the best-liked of all the officers in the country," and on another occasion she heard another man say, "Take him any way you like, he is as good as the best of them." It was, of course, most gratifying for them to know that the opinion of those with whom they would have to do, so well agreed with the opinion they had of each other, for they could be sure that what they had heard and overheard were words of honest conviction.

A good many can say from experience in regard to matrimony that anticipation is pleasanter than realization and such being the case, a long-standing engagement would seem to be preferable to a very brief one because it is a lengthening out of enjoyment, while at the same time it affords the engaged a better chance to think wisely before taking the irrevocable step, while even to those who have been long acquainted there is gain in prolonging into months this pleasant period with its golden opportunities for spontaneous confidences and affection.

Having now followed the fortunes of Mr. Findlay and Miss Blain up to the time of their engagement, we take pleasure in stating that this happy period very becomingly lasted a full year, as had been settled, and that at the end of that time they met again, according to arrangement, at Fort Chipewyan.

In the quiet evening on the day of Miss Blain's arrival they once more climbed the Athabasca rocks together. The friendly cypres which had witnessed their betrothal was still there as if awaiting their return, so also was the sweet-smelling ground fir, upon which they were presently seated; and then Mr. Findlay remarked, "My cup runneth

over," and Miss Blain, waving her hand towards the lake scenery said, "And this is the gate of heaven." Nevertheless, as the lovers looked upon the pleasant scene which seemed as it were an emblem of what was before them, Mr. Findlay became serious, for he thought of the prospect of the white woman who made her home in the North —loneliness, and likely the perils of motherhood, where medical aid would not be available; and he said to his companion, "I wonder if I have not done a selfish and unmanly thing in asking you to share life with me in a place where your trials will be greater than those of the woman born and bred here. Perhaps I deserve to get what that bird advised when we were saying good-bye on the banks of the Red River," and he shouted, "Whip-poor-will! Whip-poor-will!"

"Oh, that old bird is a humbug. I did not try to take his advice then, and I do not intend to do so now; and, at any rate, Will, don't you think it is a little late? More than that, are not your remarks a reflection on our fathers? You will make no mistake in following their example, nor shall I in following the example of our mothers."

"Well, Nellie, I was just hinting at a chance for you to back out, and I am only too pleased to find that you are not disposed to take it."

"Will, I believe we are both going into this matter very seriously, as we ought to do, and I firmly believe that strength is given to women as well as men according to their need. White women have a mission in this country, and that mission is to encourage and nerve the white man who wants to marry to wait until he can get a white woman. I have been only a year in this country; but I

have kept my eyes open, and can see that women such as Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. Donald are exercising an influence that is helping to keep our white men white; and whatever the risks, surely it is worth while accepting a position in which we can help to do that."

"Good little missionary you," replied Mr. Findlay. "I know right well the force of what you say, for when I approach such women as you or Mrs. Churchill or Mrs. Donald, I feel that your presence amongst us is most wholesome. You encourage us to be men, and when you have become my wife I shall not grudge to less fortunate fellows, and especially our old friend, Mr. Thomson, the benefit of your womanly and motherly influence."

"Oh, poor Thomson," she replied. "How can I ever forget him? You called me a missionary just now, and I can tell you I did my best as a missionary for him. Did he ever tell you of a disappointment in a love affair shortly before you and he came North?"

Miss Blain blushed as she asked the question, and when Mr. Findlay made answer in the affirmative and followed with a hearty laugh, she was not very well pleased, saying, "I assure you it was no laughing matter for us." She then went on to say, "I made love to every one of my sisters in Mr. Thomson's behalf, besides throwing out feelers in other directions; but nothing came of it. Every one was ready enough to admit his many sterling qualities; and strange as it may seem, the worst that the silly things had against him was that he did not know how to court, and when I told them that he would be all the safer as a husband on that account, what answer do you suppose I got? This—'Why don't you marry him yourself?' Ha-ha!"

Mr. Findlay and Miss Blain now discussed their plans for the future, beginning with their wedding which was to take place the following day at the residence of the Churchills. They were all right for a clergyman, as Mr. Snow had arrived with the brigade.

The event passed off pleasantly. The bride was dressed in spotless white and like all brides she looked charming, only a little more so. One of the fair daughters of the local Postmaster, Mr. Smith, was bridesmaid, and Mr. Thomson magnanimously stood by his friend as groomsman, an act that touched both bride and bridegroom, the latter showing it by a lingering handshake after the ceremony was over, and the former by raising her beautiful face to his and giving him a sisterly kiss, which, everything taken into account, was very nice indeed.

In honour of the event a dance was given in the evening in the large reception hall of the clerks' quarters, at which the Churchills and the newly wedded couple were present for a short time, the latter taking part in the opening dance.

The following day being Sunday, Mr. Snow conducted morning and evening services in the hall. In those days when the residents of Fort Chipewyan, or those visiting it from other forts, had an opportunity for attending public worship, they usually did so gladly, some of them no doubt, appreciating the opportunity all the more because of its rarity. On this occasion all the Protestants were present—in all about sixty souls—and helped according to their ability to make the service hearty and encouraging.

Although many of the worshippers came from hundreds of miles away, they had almost all originally come from overseas or from the Red River Settlement, and for

the musical part of the service there was no difficulty in selecting hymns familiar to all, such for instance as—"O God Our Help in Ages Past," "Rock of Ages," "Abide With Me" and other equally world-wide favourites. The responsibility of making the selection fell on Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. Findlay. The former played the accompaniment on a small organ, and the latter, in a voice which pleasingly combined strength and sweetness, led in the soprano, and Mr. Findlay sang a good bass and Mr. Kidd an equally good tenor. It may be said that the members of this congregation did not sing to please themselves, nevertheless, having sung they did please themselves and afterwards very generally acknowledged that they had enjoyed the singing.

Mr. Snow's addresses were of the simplest character conceivable, and must have been well understood by the least educated in his audience, and his simple words carried most weight with those who knew him best, because his preaching was adorned by his manner of living. When he spoke to them of God and righteousness they knew that he was speaking from experience. And it is hardly likely that the sixty people who that day heard him speak of the duties, privileges and blessings of the Christian calling went away without more earnest desire and sincere resolve to live better and more useful lives.

Monday was spent in completing arrangements in connection with the requirements of the Peace River trading posts, which, taking them from east to west, are as follows: Little Red River, Vermillion, Battle River, Dunvegan, St. John's, and Hudson's Hope. It took four boats to transport the goods needed for these six posts. Mr. Stait, who was to continue in charge of Fort

Vermillion, took charge of two of the boats; and Mr. Findlay, who was returning to Dunvegan, took charge of the other two.

The brigade left Fort Chipewyan on Tuesday. The first stage of the journey consisted of seven miles of pleasant sailing over the west end of the lake, which brought the travellers to the entrance of the Quatre Fourches River. This remarkable little stream, which forms one side of the Peace River delta and connects the Athabasca Lake with the Peace River, may flow either eastward or westward according to the levels at its two ends. On this occasion it happened that the Athabasca Lake was higher than the Peace River, which produced a current in the Quatre Fourches in the direction in which the travellers were going; but this current was not strong enough to be of much use, and although the wind also was favourable, owing to the narrowness of the stream, and the heavy forests which reached right down to the low banks, sailing was not practicable, and as the beach was too soft for tracking, it was necessary to depend mainly on the oars until reaching the Peace River. On coming to that wider stream, although its stronger current was against instead of with them, owing to the free sweep of the wind, now more in the direction in which they were going, they were able to lay down their oars and hoist sail, and their preference of this easier way of going forward was easily discernible in their speaking, laughing, grinning, smiling and general appearance. However, sailing up the Peace River with their loaded boats was a luxury these voyageurs did not expect to enjoy long—and they did not. All too soon there was a tie between wind and current and the sail had to come down and the tracking line got ready.

Each crew was divided into two relays of four men each, and while one relay was on the line the other rested on the boat. A change of relays was usually made without the boat coming quite ashore, and sometimes without even so much as stopping. To wade from the boat was therefore the regular thing, and those who did the latter had to sit on the gunwales long enough to allow the water in their trousers to drain back into the river.

Next to Mr. and Mrs. Findlay no one did more to make this voyage a pleasant one than did Mr. George Kidd. There was certainly no mistake made in his promotion from the position of labourer to that of clerk. With his songs and his performances on the violin, his innocent fun and good nature, he helped the voyageurs to forget the hardships of the way and to laugh when otherwise they might have groaned or even whined.

Tired as the boatmen might be after the day's travel, they were nearly always ready for a brief social time round the camp-fire before turning in for the night. On several occasions Mrs. Findlay greatly delighted them with her singing, especially when she sang some familiar songs in the chorus of which some of them were able to join, and which was rendered the more effective by means of Mr. Kidd's accompaniment on the violin. On another evening someone would tell an interesting story; and there were few days so uneventful as not to furnish subjects for conversation or innocent fun.

For instance, one day the trackers came to the mouth of a small stream, and supposing from its appearance that they could easily ford it, they went right ahead. Fortunately the steersman had his suspicions about its depth and got the men to take their poles and keep the boat

going forward independent of the tracking line; and a very timely move it was, for presently the trackers were seen to be, metaphorically speaking, in deep waters, and number one started to swim, then number two, then number three; but number four didn't, for although a Beaver he could not swim, and perhaps he thought he didn't have to, as he was already half way over and still had at least eight inches to the good, as he was that much taller than the others, and thus he continued, chin-deep, mouth-deep, nose-deep, eye-deep until he was all under, excepting his long hair which appeared and disappeared in keeping with some foot-work which he was evidently performing below. Meanwhile amusement had given place to alarm, and the steersman was shouting at the top of his voice, in Cree, *"Kipi, kipi, assowaha"* (Hasten, hasten, cross over!). Presently the swimmers struck bottom and the head of the Beaver gradually emerged from the water, and still guided by the tracking line which he grasped with his right hand, he staggered on towards the shore, where in answer to a question he said in his own language, *"Aha, tu natsutli wosto"* (Yes, I drank a little water). The men gave way to hearty laughter, in which the poor Beaver took part only to the extent of a sickly grin; for, as is well known, an exhibition of the kind furnished by him is always much more entertaining to the spectators than to the performer, partly perhaps, because as in this case, he fails to see himself as others see him.

Those who witnessed this incident, not satisfied with laughing heartily when it occurred, went on laughing through the day and laughed again round the camp-fire. Mrs. Findlay, however, with the finer instinct of the gentler sex, sensed the feeling of the Indian and quietly championed his cause at breakfast next morning. The

gentlemen admitted the justice of her strictures, although Kidd remarked that it was enough to make anybody laugh to see a beaver almost drowned through being unable to swim. A laugh followed this remark, and another when Mrs. Findlay answered, "He certainly does not live up to his name as well as Mr. Kidd does to his."

It is pleasant to relate that Mr. Kidd did show himself susceptible to kindly impressions in that he showed respect for Mrs. Findlay's opinion and the Indian's feelings by contriving in some manner to prevent any more laughter over the mishap of the latter, at any rate, within his hearing.

On a journey such as the one being described, the responsibility of selecting a suitable camping place usually rests mainly with the guide, and that functionary is sometimes severely criticized for indifference to beautiful scenery, because he may have passed some beauty spot and gone on to some nearby place not nearly so attractive; but investigation would usually make it clear that he had done so in order to secure the important requisites of a good encampment—a good landing place, good shelter and fuel sufficient within easy reach.

James Peranteau was the guide. He was an intelligent French half-breed, who was familiar with the river from its source to its outlet. Finding that Mrs. Findlay greatly admired beautiful scenery, and perhaps having an artistic eye of his own, he usually contrived to select a camping place in which picturesque scenery and the more substantial advantages just named were pleasingly combined.

In this respect he was particularly successful when on the fourth day out from Fort Chipewyan, acting with

the approval of Mr. Findlay and Mr. Stait, he brought the trackers to a halt for the night at Fort Providence, otherwise named the Little Rapid, which is ninety-eight miles from Fort Chipewyan. The river above this point flows between high limestone banks. A little lower down there are numerous out-croppings of gypsum. At the point itself the bank is only about fifteen feet high, and at that level there is a grassy terrace, the first in a succession which gradually slope upwards until connecting with the plateau a half mile or so from the river and some hundreds of feet above it.

While the tents were being pitched Mr. Findlay took his gun, and he and Mrs. Findlay started to climb the slope, reaching its upper edge just as the sun was about to sink below the horizon, and was treating the landscape to the finishing touches of a twelve hour sun-bath. First the slope they had climbed, and then the river flowing along its lower edge, then the forest-covered slope beyond, received those parting touches of their sun-bath, and over all were the heavens with arches of feathery clouds beautifully tinted by the artistic hand of nature, speaking soothingly to the travellers of the day that was dying and cheeringly of the days that were yet to come, causing Mrs. Findlay to place her hand on her husband's shoulder and whisper again, "Oh Will, isn't this beautiful?" Then she said, "A scene such as this reminds me of those lines of Bishop Heber:

'O God, O Good beyond compare,
If thus Thy meaner works are fair,
If thus Thy glories gild the sky
Of ruined earth and sinful man,
How glorious must those mansions be
Where Thy redeemed shall dwell with Thee.'"

Then she said, "What a fitness in the names which apply here—the river upon which we are looking is called Peace River, and the spot upon which we stand is called Point Providence."

In the brief silence which followed Mr. Findlay tenderly passed an arm round his fair young wife and said, "I too have an inspiration. As a man having his eyes open, I see along with the things before us now, other things which are soon to be—the things which go along with Christianity and civilization — churches, schools and homesteads. I see herds of cattle. I look over fields of golden grain. I see that our wandering tent —our home for tonight—has given place to substantial buildings which have been quarried out of the rocks which are so handy. Children from various points are making towards this spot, because we happen to be standing on the site of a future school. Now it is another day. It is Sunday and people are entering another building which has tower and spire and bell, because though they dwell in a good land where there is a Providence and a river called Peace, 'They desire a better country, even an heavenly.' "

Just then Mr. Findlay's thoughts were diverted from his prophetic vision by a flutter of wings in a nearby aspen grove. Approaching the spot cautiously he discovered a number of partridges partaking of their supper of dry seeds. He succeeded in bagging three of them, and when he rejoined Mrs. Findlay she expressed satisfaction and then pensively remarked, "Whatever we may become, so far we are terrestrial and pretty sanguinary at that, aren't we?" And Mr. Findlay laughing replied, "When I heard that flutter in the bush I was moved by a spirit that calls for something more

substantial than scenery, and now I have a vision of fried partridges, also fried onions and boiled potatoes, so we had better race down the slope and enjoy realization while we satisfy our wholesome appetites."

Mrs. Findlay took the lead and arrived at the camp some steps ahead of Mr. Findlay, and some of the men—knowing no better—really believed she was the swifter of the two. Perhaps she was.

Once there she entered the tent, threw down her hat, donned a working apron and rolled up her sleeves, and with the aid of Mr. Kidd and the man who regularly waited on them, Mr. Findlay's vision was fulfilled in a wonderfully short time in the meal which was temptingly spread within the tent.

After tea there was something in the nature of a concert around the main camp-fire. Mr. Kidd got out his violin and Mrs. Findlay sang several songs—popular at that time, and for that matter popular still—among them "Annie Laurie," "My Old Kentucky Home," and "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground." Most of the men were able to join in the choruses. Mrs. Findlay proposed that they close in the usual concert style by singing the National Anthem. After that Mr. Kidd suggested that in acknowledgment of the musical treat which Mrs. Findlay had given them, they should sing, "She's a Jolly Good Fellow," and forthwith they did so, lustily. When Mrs. Findlay had thanked them for their appreciation and wished them good-night, one of the voyageurs said to the others, "Boys, you could just hear the beavers clapping their tails every time she sang." And a Scotsman added, "And every time you sang I could hear an owld owl just a-hootin." The last speaker apparently

avoided collision with a moccasined foot by hastily disappearing into the darkness.

At the next encampment west of Point Providence, the men spent a good part of the social hour around the evening camp-fire, in giving an entertaining exhibition of their knowledge of the lay of the river. James Peranteau apparently visualized every curve of the river along its entire length of eight hundred miles from the Rockies to Lake Athabasca; and there were others, including Mr. Stait, who had equally accurate knowledge of considerable portions of the river.

It was interesting to watch their manner of demonstration. The demonstrator faced up or down stream as the case might require, and evidently kept his mind's eye rivetted on the river until he had concluded his mental journey. With his right hand open and stretched forward, he worked it and his whole body with a slightly swaying motion, now to right, now to left, in imitation of the curves of the stream, mentioning the names of well-known points, islands and tributaries as he proceeded; and when he reached his objective, which was always a fort, he brought down his right hand edgeways, on the open palm of his left, emphatically mentioning at the same time the name of the fort.

Four days later the brigade arrived at the Little Red River trading post, which is two hundred and twenty-two miles from Fort Chipewyan, and stands at the junction of the Red and Peace Rivers. This post consisted of two ordinary log houses with mud-washed walls and roofs covered with spruce bark, which was the style of roof most common up to that time in the Company's establishments in the North. The bark used for the

purpose was obtained by stripping off the jackets from the lower five feet of the standing trees. The sheets thus obtained averaged three feet in width. The difference between a bark covered roof and one of thatch was chiefly one of difference in material, as both called for roof-poles underneath, thickly coated with mud or clay; but whereas thatch was kept in place by means of some more of the same mixture, bark was held in position by means of small cross-poles placed two feet apart, two feet being the exposure to weather of each tier; that is to say, each tier of bark rested on a small cross-pole at its base, and two feet higher another cross-pole held it in place by being securely pegged to the roof-poles underneath.

The Red River is so called because its waters have a slightly reddish tinge, attributed by some to the characteristics of the muskegs where it takes its rise, and by others to the nature of the limestone bed over which it passes.

The brigade stayed at this place only long enough to land the winter outfit required for this post, which consisted of about fifty packages of general merchandise. Then after getting sufficient venison and potatoes to make one good meal it pushed on to the *Chute* which is four and a half miles farther up the Peace River, and there they encamped for the night.

No one desiring the picturesque in a camping place could condemn the Chute on that score, for it had the scenery which made it a most interesting study; but it was scenery mixed up with noise, and after the curtain went down on the scenery, the noise went on. As things were it had to be, for with the Peace River here spreading

itself out to the width of one mile, and here and there dropping down twelve feet perpendicularly, while in other places it rushed violently over or against projecting rocks, resulting noises there were bound to be—and there were—and combined, they amounted to a mighty roar. It was therefore hardly a place to be selected with a view to peaceful slumber, and the experience of a number of the travellers was doubtless similar to that of Mr. Kidd, who declared next morning that he had slept all night with both ears wide open, a statement which, of course, it would have been absurd to dispute.

Next day the goods were carried about one hundred yards above the Chute, whither the boats also were taken, being hauled thither partly on land and partly on water, one at a time, by the combined crews. By two o'clock the boats were loaded and the journey was resumed.

Two days later the brigade arrived at the important trading post, Fort Vermillion, which is forty-seven miles west of the Chute. This brought Mr. Stait to the end of his journey, as he was to continue the officer in charge at this fort. From here westward the brigade consisted of only two boats.

At this fort the Hudson's Bay Company did more in an agricultural way than in any other part of the North. It had a small farm under the management of Michael Lezotte, a French Canadian from the province of Quebec. He was a fine old gentleman and was delighted when informed by Mr. Stait that Mrs. Findlay wished to see his garden and dairy. Later, when they were joined by Mr. Findlay and Mr. Stait, and the latter asked Michael if he thought he could spare the Findlays some butter and vegetables for their *nimawin* (Cree for provisions

to be used on a journey), he answered, "*Ahbien oui! Pour le sur.* I tell madam alredee she must have all de fresh butter and pitatees she can eat all de way to Dunvegan."

The journey was resumed at ten o'clock, and travelling at the usual rate, Battle River, a third or fourth-rate stream, which is one hundred and fifty-seven miles from Vermillion, was reached in six days. This river flows into the Peace from the north-west, and a little above the point of junction there stood two small mud-washed houses, representing one of the Company's trading-posts. Generally it was occupied only in winter.

Another four and a half days' tracking brought the travellers to the Peace River Landing, one hundred and thirty miles from Battle River, at which point the trail between Lesser Slave Lake and Dunvegan crosses the river. Three miles farther up-stream they came to Smoky River and the next sixty-three miles, which they made in two days, brought them to their destination, Fort Dunvegan.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Findlays at Dunvegan

At the time of our story Fort Dunvegan was still a place of considerable importance; but owing to the rapid decimation of the Indians by disease it was even then beginning to lose prestige, and in the first years of the present century it was abandoned by the Hudson's Bay Company and also by the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. However, the ancient trails which converge at this point continue to be used because the settlers found no better crossing than the one selected by the savages and herds of buffalo thousands of years before, so that Dunvegan today (1925) has the distinction of being provided with a good ferry.

When Mr. Findlay took charge at Dunvegan there were about fifty Beaver Indian families trading there, which would not be more than one-fourth the number which assembled there for that purpose when the post was first established, a decrease which might be regarded as indicating the proportionate reduction within that period in the numbers of the entire tribe.

The Beavers were at one time the most powerful and warlike of the northern tribes. It is believed that the river of their country, called in their language *Oon-che-ga*, the large river, later came to be named Peace River in commemoration of a treaty of peace entered into on its banks when they and the Slavies, who were their allies, smoked the pipe of peace with the Crees who had invaded their territory from the direction of Lake Athabasca.

Another reminder of the bellicose character of the tribe and their prowess as well is contained in the name of the neighbouring tribe to the north, who are called Slaves or Slavies, on account of the Beavers, who are larger and more pugnacious—and possibly lazier—having subjected them to a sort of slavery. Another indication that this tribe could once claim great strength, numerical and otherwise, remains until now, in the facts that the Sarsees near Calgary, five hundred miles south of Edmonton, the Sikannis west of the Rockies and north of St. John's, and the Nahannis in the Liard country, speak practically the same language—that of the *Onchega,* aborigines, who called themselves *Tsa-o-ti-ni,* the Beaver people. Doubtless although the Beavers are the parents of the others named, today they are to be found at only widely separated points along the Peace River, and number all told less than one hundred.

When Mr. Findlay took charge, Fort Dunvegan consisted of seven houses, three of them ordinary log buildings finished off with the approved mud-washed walls and barked roofs. These were the men's houses. The others were larger and more pretentious, having whitewashed walls and shingled roofs. One was the officers' quarters, a second was the office, another the saleshop, and the fourth was the provisions store, used also for stowing away dog-sleighs and harness. In addition to these there was also a stable, where a few head of cattle were kept over winter.

As Mr. Findlay knew that he would be returning to Dunvegan with a wife, he had put in a good deal of time and labour the previous winter in making the interior of the big house neat and comfortable to the extent that means were available, a limit which in certain directions

was very soon reached, for it was an unwritten law with the Company that its employees should bear in mind the cost of transport, and except in cases otherwise provided, as one might say, eschew the use of imported goods. In regard to furs, it was not in order to use them as rugs, robes or clothing, or in any other way divert them from the regular channels of the fur trade into others of a private or domestic character. For these reasons Mr. Findlay's house furnishings did not include imported furniture or valuable rugs; but "love never faileth" and between patience and elbow grease he got what he wanted or substitutes for them.

In the matter of a rug, this is what happened.

An unfortunate ox, possessed of a beautiful black coat and an adventurous nature, grazing one day on the brink of a four hundred foot precipice known as *Le Gros Cap,* which stands one hundred and fifty yards back of the fort, and venturing a little too far after the succulent buffalo grass, the earth gave way under his weight, and he was hurled through space, landing for an instant on his head on a ledge half way down, thereby breaking his neck, so that his sufferings were over by the time he reached the flat. Its glossy hide being removed and nicely dressed, it made an effective and not inelegant rug for Mrs. Findlay's bedroom; and as Mrs. Findlay looked on this and many other evidences of her husband's forethought and affection, that love which "suffereth long and is kind" enabled her to see a beauty in everything; and her spontaneous and unstinted praise made her husband glad, not only because it was such a pleasure to see her so pleased and happy, but also because, manlike, it flattered him to believe that he had proved to his wife that he was a man of taste.

The Dunvegan flat on which stands the fort is on the north bank of the river, and is surrounded by scenery which entitles it to be regarded as one of the many beauty spots of the country. From this flat the south bank is seen to be thickly covered with spruce and other trees, presenting a mantle of green which reaches down evenly but rather abruptly from the table land to the river. The north bank is clearer and slopes back more gradually, extending half a mile before reaching the plateau. This plateau is nine hundred feet above the river. The descent, however, from this to the lower level is easily made either afoot or with a vehicle, as the wagon road, which follows a dry ravine, enables one to reach the flat on a fairly easy and uniform grade.

When the brigade arrived with the year's outfit of merchandise there were lively times on the Dunvegan flat, until the Indians had been outfitted and had left for their winter hunting grounds. This some of them were willing enough to do because of the trouble they were having with their horses; for most of them had horses and each of them tried to keep his own little band apart from those of the others, and to that end placed a stallion in charge, whose duty it was to guard his band against other stallions or wolves or dogs, or in fact any mortal creature except a human being. These stallions were heroic creatures; but they were also covetous and insatiable, and it not unfrequently happened that one of them would rob another of his last mare and chase the horse himself out of sight. Such a thing, however, never happened without a battle.

One day two of these animals started a fight right among the tents on the Dunvegan flat. In this instance, as usual, it was the heavyweight horse which was the

aggressor. He made a dash after an animal under the care of a smaller stallion; but that smaller animal after the manner of stallions had no intention of submitting tamely to any such treatment, and fought bravely for his rights. And in the meantime great was the excitement in the camp. Men shouted, squaws screamed, and children fled to their mothers or their tents. Of course in a little while the smaller horse was being worsted, to the sorrow of all impartial observers, who were also lovers of fair play. Then it was that his owner, who was no feather-weight, seeing how things were going, took a hand with a tent-pole, which he brought down upon the fierce aggressor with such force that it made him shake his head and take to his heels. That, however, did not end the fighting, for the owner of the larger horse, being aggrieved over the tent-pole handicap, said things to the owner of the small horse which that gentleman did not feel called upon to stand, so throwing down the tent-pole the two of them went at it with their fists, and the man with the lighter horse having the heavier body knocked his opponent about in great style, and if he did not reduce his stock of hair by a fistful, it was only because it was stuck on so hard, or because its owner preferred being pulled about instead of plucked. Truly, Beavers and horses in their natural state are pugnacious creatures.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the annual social gathering at the fort in autumn had its disadvantages.

In outfitting the Indians Mr. Findlay had three assistants, viz., Mr. George Kidd, clerk; Mr. Pierre Poitras, Postmaster; and his son, Louis, who was Beaver Indian interpreter.

As soon as the Indians had taken their departure, there was the usual laying down of plans for the winter, so that work might be carried on systematically, and no one given a chance to get into mischief for lack of something useful to do.

Mr. Findlay tried to insist on Mrs. Findlay having a good easy time as long as she could.

He told her, "You had better install the same woman in the kitchen who was housekeeper for Mr. Kidd and me last winter."

"No thank you," said she. "What do you think a wife is for? Besides, I am liable to mischief like other folks, and I think you must know by this time that I am a very busy body. However, as one who has promised to obey, I offer this as a compromise—let it be the daily duty of one of the men to place wood and water in the kitchen every morning sufficient for the day, and I will arrange for a woman to come in and do the washing and scrubbing once a week."

That evening at tea, Mrs. Findlay consulted Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd as to their preferences in the matter of preparing their rations. She said, "As it has to be a case of meat three times a day, I should like to know your tastes beforehand, so that I may know how to work in my variations."

Mr. Findlay laughed and said, "If the moose-hunters don't kill, you won't have much trouble over the variations."

"Ah, sir, if ever the day comes when we shall have to do on half rations, it is then that you will know the kind of a cook you have installed in the big house. We were

short of meat for a time at Fort Liard and Mrs. Donald and I made a special study of how to make one pound of meat go as far as two, and Mr. Donald used to say that in all the years of his stay in the North, he had never had his meals dished up more to his liking. It is wonderful what can be done with lots of vegetables and grease, some flour and a little ingenuity."

"I have noticed it," said Mr. Kidd. "Probably Mr. Donald and I have similar tastes. At any rate, I am prepared to say as he said, and after what I have enjoyed here it would be audacity on my part to hint at anything different from what suits you. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. I wonder if Miss Linden is a good cook?"

Mrs. Findlay replied, "I rather think she is; but one thing you can be certain of—whatever Mary Linden does will be done as well as she can."

"Good girl! Good girl! In fact I think she is too good for me."

Mr. Findlay looked at Mrs. Findlay and said, "I wonder why we all feel that way?"

She answered, "Because good men could not feel any other way about a woman; and I'll tell you something, only don't tell on me. We poor things feel the same towards our men. Ha-ha! Ha-ha!"

The gentlemen looked at each other and shook their heads dubiously, and then Mr. Kidd said, "Well, I am sure that if the poor things think so they are very much mistaken."

Mrs. Findlay said, "Well Mr. Kidd, whatever you do with Miss Linden after she becomes Mrs. Kidd, don't

make the mistake that Postmaster Bernard made with his young wife. You know he was married last winter."

Both gentlemen had heard of the event and Mr. Findlay asked, "How is the old gentleman getting along?"

In answering this question Mrs. Findlay told the following story, which she prefaced with the remark,"As you are aware Mr. Bernard has an exalted opinion of the position of an officer in the service of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, so when he married a Tukudh girl, who, by the way, is twenty-five years his junior, he felt that he would have to do some uplifting, even although Martha Tukudh had been two years a servant for the wife of a Company's officer and one year for the wife of a missionary. If his junior partner was to share in the dignity and honours of his position, it was, of course, but fair that she should share in the responsibility of maintaining these as well. So in due course she was installed in an easy chair in the parlour, and seriously informed by her partner that she was to regard that room as her proper place; and that from there she was to issue her orders to the woman who had been engaged as her servant. Naturally, Mrs. Bernard soon became afflicted with the trouble of the North and was 'thinking long,' and being a sociable creature, and, most likely, having a fellow-feeling for Madelain, who was in that state of life from which she had been so recently called, she moved into the kitchen, and was enjoying a good chat with Madelain over the local happenings of the day, when who should enter quite unexpectedly but Mr. Bernard himself, who kindly but very solemnly thus addressed her: 'Now Mrs. Bernard, this is no place for you. *The idea of an officer's wife to be staying in the kitchen.*'"

After the three of them had enjoyed a wholesome laugh, Mr. Findlay said, "Of course, had Mrs. Bernard been a different sort of person, like you, for instance, Mr. Bernard might not have felt that way about it."

"Well perhaps," came the reply, "he might have felt that way, but had he so expressed himself he would have been made to feel that the kitchen was no place for him."

Afterwards in the kitchen of the big house Mr. Findlay often repeated those words—*"the idea of an officer's wife to be staying in the kitchen"*; but the only effect it had upon the lady who presided there was to make her laugh with pleasure, because her officer himself liked the place so well, and unquestionably because he liked the cook.

When Mrs. Findlay had told the anecdote about Mr. Bernard, Mr. Kidd said, "I can quite understand Mr. Bernard's point of view, even if, under like circumstances, I might not feel like copying his methods. The feeling of dignity attached to the position of Hudson's Bay officer has not had very much time to grow in my case; but I am conscious of it out of regard for the Company as well as myself. Like Mr. Bernard I know what it was to have been a labourer in the service among other common labourers, and that helps to make me more susceptible to the feeling. I am conscious of having to dress and act up to the new part—that of *ookimasis*, little master, and when I go among my former fellow-workmen I am conscious that they respect me the more, because instead of busying myself with work like theirs any more I keep my hands in my pockets and simply give them their orders. Truly of all the creatures which God has made, man is the funniest of them all."

Mr. Findlay said, "It is the Company's policy to leave their officers as free as possible to give their whole attention to the fur trade, and to oversee rather than take part in such work as boating, dog-driving, carpentering and the like; yet the Company is well aware that under certain circumstances a departure from such a rule is permissible and even desirable. It is, therefore, for each officer to use his own judgment as to when the circumstances existing call for such a departure. And should he deem it advisable to take part in the work of those who are under him, let him rest satisfied that if he does so judiciously, there is more likely to be a sacrifice of conceit and laziness than of dignity. Nevertheless, this I say, let the wise officer keep his place, mind his own business and the Company's, and make those who are under him do the same.

"Now let me see if I can tell as good a story as Mrs. Findlay. But first let us draw up our chairs before the cheerful fire.

"The moral of my story is this: Never mind what a man may be, he must be prepared to let his dignity go by the board sometimes.

"This happened to our esteemed friend Mr. Bayard only a year or so after he was married. He was travelling northward with Mrs. Bayard, via Lake Winnipeg, in a York boat, the crew of which was comprised of eight men, one of whom was, like himself, newly married, and he also had his young wife along. The voyage was a wretched one and on the second day out there was a constant drizzling rain, mingled with sleet that chilled them to the bone. When night was coming on they found themselves far from the safe

harbour they had expected to reach earlier in the day, so it was decided to make a landing somewhere at all hazards. As the boat was lightly loaded and the lake not very rough, they succeeded in landing on what looked in the pitchy darkness like an unsheltered point or island, on which nothing was discernible except sand and boulders. They had then been six hours without food, and during most of that time it had been raining, and it was raining still. Fortunately the guide had had the forethought to *cache* away some kindling and a few dry billets in the prow of the boat. This at least assured to the crew the means of making tea and of obtaining a little warmth for a few minutes, after which they would have to crawl under the wet boat covers, and do the best they could guided entirely by the sense of feeling. It was then that Mr. and Mrs. Bayard decided to throw their dignity to the winds, and after consultation with the guide, an invitation was issued to the crew to be their guests for the night.

"Their tent was the only one in the party, and it was stretched to full capacity, and the fire kindled as near within as was practicable. Then the men were invited to fetch their bedding and provisions and place them under cover. Mrs. Bayard confesses that she would not have seconded Mr. Bayard's invitation as cheerfully as she did had she not been moved by curiosity to see how eight people could be squeezed into a tent intended for four. The tent was lit by two candles fastened one to each pole. After tea, to which Mrs. Bayard contributed a treat in the form of biscuits and preserves, the next thing was to assign the men their respective places. The Bayards and the other married couple slept between the poles, lying across the tent, and the others lay along the eaves one at either end, beside the married folks, and two at

their feet. For some hours after they had all been wrapped in peaceful slumber, there occurred a sudden and general awakening, caused by a great racket going on somewhere near the centre of the group. It turned out that the married man was subject to cramps, and waking up this night in their clutches, he kicked out with all his might, forgetting about the man at his feet, and that man, as though having visions of a kicking night-mare, gave a shout and struck out vigorously in the direction of the kicks. Loud laughter followed the explanations of the aggressor, and some more followed when his victim asked Mr. Bayard if that was what might be called a case of assault and battery.

"When morning came and the guide discovered where they were, the tent was hastily struck, and very soon a more suitable landing was made, at a spot near which there was known to be a good slough for ducks. Two of the men went away with their guns while the others built a splendid fire. In a short time the men returned with six ducks, and these were soon roasting on as many ponasks before the fire, and when they were done to a turn, the wife of the boatman approached Mrs. Bayard with a juicy mallard transfixed on a ponask and handing it to her said, in Cree, 'This is yours'; and the man who had been battered, speaking for the others, said, 'You treated us like princes last night, and this is as near as we can get to treating you like a queen.'

"When I heard Mr. Bayard tell this story he wound up by saying, 'When Mrs. Bayard and I got a chance to discuss the matter alone we agreed that even supposing we may have sacrificed a little dignity at night it was more than made up to us in the morning in the evident good-will and esteem of our travelling companions.' "

Mrs. Findlay had spoken of her mission in the North; and during the years she spent there, she never forgot it, and it may be said that it broadened out into one of general usefulness to all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children. She taught the women to knit and crochet and to do other kinds of fancy work, and found them willing and apt pupils. On the other hand they found her so able to understand and sympathize with them in their troubles, that they were quick to seek her advice in cases of sickness, and her treatment was usually successful, possibly because she always got a chance to nip the evil in the bud.

As to her own health, she did not trust to luck or chance, but to Providence and common sense. Few indeed were the days when she and Mr. Findlay did not go out either for a walk or drive in the bracing winter air. Mr. Findlay had four train dogs—large and beautiful creatures they were—and when hitched on to their parchment cariole decked out in their beaded taupes and strings of little bells they seemed highly pleased and looked as if holding their heads a little higher and curling their tails a little more than usual. The regular drive was two miles up the river and return. On the way up they were allowed to trot along gently; but on the two mile home stretch they were encouraged to full speed and usually made the distance in twelve minutes. It was a most exhilarating experience, and Mrs. Findlay used to say of it that there could not possibly be a better antidote for ennui.

In order to brighten the lives of the residents of the fort, the Findlays had a social evening at the big house once a week, at which all were free to attend. Knowing of the bashfulness which afflicted the average woman of

the North, Mrs. Findlay was wont to entertain the women in a room by themselves for the first half hour. Then they were invited to join the men in the dining-room, where for the next half hour they enjoyed music instrumental and vocal. Lastly, tea or coffee and buns were handed round, and when at ten o'clock the guests took their departure there was in their "Good-night sir, Good-night ma'm," a ring of sincerity which must have sent their entertainers to their pillows satisfied that this last act of theirs could not be classed among things done which ought not to have been done.

Besides the social evening, Postmaster Poitras once a week took tea at the big house by invitation, and made up a complement of four for an evening at whist. There was no better player in the North than Mrs. Findlay, and during the winter she and her partner Mr. Poitras more than held their own against Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd.

The favourite card game in the North at that time, especially among the men, was euchre. The common practice was to play for small stakes, the favourite one being a small plug of tobacco, and this in the course of one winter might accumulate on the winning side to the extent of ten pounds. A similar rule might have been followed by the players at Dunvegan; but Mrs. Findlay put down her foot upon it, and Mr. Poitras, although his card playing had brought him many free smokes, gallantly supported his fair partner, saying, "Sartanlee we don't want a ladee like Madam Finlee to play for tibaccee." And so it was that the card playing at Dunvegan that winter was not given the chance to be as the thin end of the wedge in the evolution of gambling.

On Sunday morning the good rule was followed of having a short religious service taken from the Church

of England liturgy. In the evening there was a service of song, which was attended by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, a happy condition of things for which credit was due to Mr. Kidd, for when he and the Findlays were arranging the service, he proposed and they agreed that it should always commence with the singing of the Magnificat and end with "Lead Kindly Light." Then he went round and invited everybody, taking special pains when inviting the Poitras and other Roman Catholics, to assure them that the service was to be as Roman Catholic as possible, to which end it was always to commence with "The Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary" and end with a hymn composed by Cardinal Newman. It worked all right, and good was undoubtedly accomplished, showing that, within proper bounds, "the end justifies the means," and that sometimes it is just as well or better to call a spade by some other name.

The average temperature in winter at Dunvegan was much the same as in the Red River Settlement, there being some days in the former place which were colder than the coldest, and others which were warmer than the warmest in the latter place. This higher rise in the Peace River country is due to its being so much nearer the Pacific, causing it to be so affected by the chinook winds blowing inland from that quarter as to render a thaw even in mid-winter not unlikely. As for the summer it may be from ten days to two weeks shorter; but there being two hours more of sunlight to the day, vegetation is fully more rapid than in many places much farther south. Even at the time of this story the success met with in raising a few vegetables and cereals showed that the country was well suited for agricultural purposes.

Usually the winter begins to loosen its icy hold on the country about the end of March, and in the beginning of April among the first signs of coming spring there is to be heard the sound of water running down the ravines, which have plowed their way down the slopes in the course of centuries. With its fine southern aspect, the Dunvegan slope is soon divested of its mantle of snow and the virgin soil gets ready to deck itself out in brighter colours; and first of all the drab coloured earth becomes variegated with a light greyish blue, brought about by innumerable bunches of anemone which have suddenly popped through the ground after their magic fashion. Then right soon the grey gives place to a greenish tinge, which tells of springing grass, and over the background of green thus provided, violets yellow and blue are soon thickly sprinkled, then no sooner do these disappear than a beautiful terra cotta flower covers the slopes more thickly than ever, and the green and terra cotta are sprinkled over with tiger lilies, roses and vetches.

An equally interesting but a wild and grander sight was that presented by the freshet in June, when in a day or so the river usually rose twenty-five feet or so above low water level, and within a few feet of the level of the flat upon which the fort stood. The river would then be full of floating trees, many of them of great size, and as they were swept along by a current of not less than seven or eight miles an hour, there certainly was suggested a speed well described in the parlance of the North as "flying along." When Mrs. Findlay, standing beside her husband, beheld for the first time this mighty display of water power, she did so with a feeling akin to awe, and they both had little to say, except to comment on the splendid specimens of timber that were passing, and

which indicated very conclusively that in the islands and tributaries farther west there must be timber enough with which to build the homes of a very considerable population.

The country which abounds in flowers is usually well supplied with fruit as well, and it was so on the upper Peace River, where most of the wild fruits found in the Red River valley not only grew in abundance, but were of excellent quality, especially so in regard to raspberries, strawberries and saskatoons.

In the bush the hardwood trees, oak, ash and elm were not to be found and the soft maple also was missing; but there was an abundance of red and white spruce, tamarack, jack pine, balsam, aspen, birch and alder.

In the matter of bird life, the Findlays found no difference. All their bird friends were represented with the single exception of the whip-poor-will.

To the officers who were obliged to remain inland at their posts while the summer transport was being attended to by others, the summer season was one of unspeakable loneliness, and often the sentiments of Dafoe were not only felt, but sometimes, in his words, they were also expressed:

"O solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place."

The Findlays never had occasion to repeat these lines except when describing how they had heard them recited by some Crusoe of the North. For themselves they harboured no such sentiments, for they found ample

charm in each other's love and companionship, in the beauties of creation by which they were surrounded and in the goodness and mercy which daily crowned their lives.

It suited the Findlays admirably to be given the chance of staying inland during the first summer of their married life; and as Postmaster Poitras was quite competent to take charge of the fort until autumn, they laid themselves out to have a real good time by enjoying the freedom of the Peace River country which a kind Providence had seen fit to bestow upon them, and whenever the weather was favourable they either went on a long stroll or a saddle excursion. Their horses were the pick of the Company's band, and were smart in appearance and gentle in disposition. Good horses seem to find pleasure in being ridden by those who treat them kindly, so the two which carried the Findlays on their numerous excursions must have received considerable horse enjoyment, especially when they were guided to some gentle slope where luscious saskatoons grew on detached bushes of a single stem not over two feet in height, where, feeling their reins left slack, the knowing creatures would drop their heads nearly to the ground and taking hold of a stem would raise the head quickly, and in that single movement strip the stem of practically all its berries and a good many leaves as well, then while masticating this sweet morsel they would pass on to other stems and serve them in the same way.

During the summer the Findlays made two longer excursions on saddle. The first was to Grand Prairie, where a Cree who had hunted for the fort during the previous winter had, by arrangement, made preparation for their visit, and had provided a clean, new tent for

their exclusive use, and a supply of the choicest food of the season. The Indian and his wife considered it a great honour to entertain an *Ookimao* and *Ookimaskwao* for two whole days, and they did so without any feeling of awkwardness because of the tactfulness of their guests, who also had the advantage of perfectly understanding their language and manners. So greatly was Mrs. Findlay impressed with the affectionate and withal respectful bearing of their Indian hostess, that when presenting her with a scissors at the end of a two days' pleasant visit, she told her she wanted it to be a reminder of how much she and her husband had enjoyed their visit. A little later, when taking leave, she kissed her on the lips. Then as soon as they were fairly on the road she said to her husband, "Do you think, Will, that in kissing Mrs. Kisikao I went a little too far?"

"Not at all," he replied. "Nevertheless, I remembered the words of Mr. Bernard and mentally adapted them to the present situation—*'The idea of an officer's wife kissing an Indian.'* "

"And this is what passed through my mind," retorted Mrs. Findlay—"I hope my husband won't follow my example."

After resting a week at home the Findlays started out on a visit to Lesser Slave Lake, going overland on saddle via the Peace River Crossing.

The officer in charge at Lesser Slave Lake, as well as his wife, were, up to the time of this visit, strangers to the Findlays; but had they been old and dear friends they could not have given them a more hearty welcome, and they were made to feel at home not only by words, but by those many quiet little acts of thoughtfulness which

mean so much more to visitors than mere words. The visit lasted ten days, and to the ladies they were days of almost perfect happiness; for in those days a white woman living in the North who had not been born and bred to it, was in a sense the most isolated of its inhabitants; and when, as on this occasion, two such women met, it was an opportunity for loving communion and an interchange of sacred confidences which womenkind only can understand and appreciate. So when the morning of the tenth day arrived and the visitors had to start on their return, these two sisterly souls indulged in a long and tender embrace, and while bravely fighting back their tears, expressed mutual thankfulness for their ten days of delightful companionship, and comforted each other in anticipation of a not far distant day when, according to plans, they would meet on a return visit at Fort Dunvegan.

CHAPTER NINE

Some Happenings of the Next Fifteen Years

When the Findlays went to the North the Hudson's Bay officers were getting fairly well reconciled to interference with the fur trade by American traders who came from British Columbia *via* the Fraser and Peace Rivers, and by other traders who came from Edmonton *via* the Athabasca River and Lesser Slave Lake. These traders were usually referred to by the Hudson's Bay Company as "the opposition."

This opposition annually sent out a goodly number of packs of valuable furs, which not only reduced the number sent out by the Company, but had the more regrettable effect of quickly reducing the supply of the more valuable fur-bearing animals, especially bear and beaver. This was due to the greater inducements the Indians had to hunt, in the higher prices received for their furs, and to their being able to find a market even for furs procured out of season.

During the two centuries the Hudson's Bay Company was in control of the country, in the rare instances in which it changed its policy, it could always be said that it did so for good and sufficient reasons, and when its control ended with the transfer in 1870, changes amounting to reconstruction became inevitable. This was particularly the case regarding methods of transportation. In the course of a few years the open York boats were of necessity replaced by steamers which operated on the Athabasca, Peace and MacKenzie Rivers.

The cause of missions shared in the benefits of this change, and in a few years the Anglican staff of workers advanced from three to twelve, and the Roman Catholic also showed equal benefit from the change.

Among those who came in to strengthen the staff of missionary workers was a Mr. Charles Bernie, who was encouraged to do so by the Rev. Charles Snow.

Mr. Bernie was a young man of medium height and build, and in his own estimation was medium in other respects. Yet notwithstanding his modesty, he had unbounded confidence in the ability of the ordinary man to accomplish extraordinary things through the power of dogged perseverance, and he held that the latter quality and a liberal supply of common sense had been bestowed on him as some compensation for lack of superior talent. Without being a fatalist or a predestinarian, he believed that every man was sent into the world with his own particular niche to fill, and that he would succeed in doing so to the extent that he looked upwards and did his best. And any man whose religious pretentions savoured of a claim to perfection of living, did not appeal to Mr. Bernie as a perfect man, but rather as a perfect enigma.

This young missionary made the first part of the journey to the North as one of a party of missionaries who travelled over the prairie taking their goods along in ox-carts, he and two other young missionaries being each placed in charge of an ox and a cart by the Rev. Mr. Dyers, who was in charge of the party. There was also a young American by the name of Ferris, who accompanied the party as far as Qu'Appelle, who also drove his ox and cart, in return for which he received shelter and board.

According to Mr. Dyers' arrangement there were two "messes." The ox-drivers who were also missionaries sat at the first table with the missionaries who were not drivers; but Mr. Ferris, although the equal of the missionaries as regards education, being on this trip only as ox-driver, he was assigned a place with the other ox-drivers. By the time the party reached Qu'Appelle, something in the nature of a friendship had sprung up between Mr. Bernie and Mr. Ferris, and the former was rather pleased when shortly before parting the latter set forth his American views respecting the Rev. Mr. Dyers' funny distinctions between his ox-drivers. He spoke with the genuine American twang after this fashion:

"I reckon that your boss finds the principles of the Great Missionary Leader a little too stringent, or he would have arranged to have a small party like this in one circle at meals as well as at prayers. Looking at it all round now, and answering on the square, don't you think, Mr. Bernie, that it would have been more consistent?"

"Well now, Mr. Ferris, I'll do my best to fit a square peg into your square hole, and to begin with, I don't mind admitting to you that in my opinion the Great Leader to whom you have referred exemplified the grandest kind of socialism which, somehow, his followers 'can't get on to.' Nevertheless, I believe that I can prove to you that Mr. Dyers was justified, according to the teaching of the said Great Leader, to arrange as he did about the meals for this party."

"Wa-al now, I'd just like to hear you try."

"Very well then. It's like this: the man who drives an ox is an ox-driver, isn't he?"

"No getting out of that, sir."

"Very well, that was the position which you accepted, and have very creditably filled for the past few days. Now in the days of the Great Teacher, plowing was done with oxen, and the hired man drove the oxen as well as guided the plow, therefore *he* was an ox-driver."

"No getting out of it, sir."

"Very well. What happened to this ox-driver when he went home about supper time? Listen and I'll read it to you. 'But which of you having a servant plowing (or feeding cattle) will say unto him by-and-by, when he is come from the field, go and sit down to meat? and will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?' You may therefore see that Mr. Dyers actually stretched a point when instead of asking you to wait on him, he allowed you to go direct from your ox-driving to your meals."

Mr. Ferris laughed, and after apparently making a hurried calculation on his thumb-nail, said, "I reckon that since those words were spoken which you have just read, this here old world has turned round 700,000 times, and we have turned round too and become more progressive, so that we can't be bossed any more in that way."

"Well, Mr. Ferris, as we are to part here let me express the hope that you may soon find a position more commensurate with your abilities than ox-driving; but when you get on a level with Mr. Dyers I hope you won't try to get even also."

"Not at all. Should he and I ever meet again, I shall be very happy to enjoy with him pleasant reminiscences of this journey."

Mr. Bernie's journey by ox-cart ended at Green Lake, from which point, thanks to the Hudson's Bay Company, he was enabled to proceed to Ile à la Crosse in a birch bark canoe manned by four men including himself.

On his arrival there he was informed by the officer in charge that the best he would be able to do to help him forward on his way would be to furnish him a passage on a boat which would be leaving for Long Portage at the end of a week.

While waiting here for this opportunity of continuing his journey, Mr. Bernie's sporting proclivities came very near costing him his life. Near the fort was a slough or marsh in which were a few ducks, and on its nearer shore, about twenty-five rods from the fort, there lay a lopsided dugout. Mr. Bernie used this craft on three different afternoons in going after ducks, and each time succeeded in getting two or three; but on the fourth occasion all he got was a ducking. The swamp was full of reeds, which in places were penetrated by narrow inlets. Where there were no reeds, weeds grew so thick that it was an extremely difficult matter to turn the dugout end for end. By way of improving on this, Mr. Bernie decided he would turn his body only and paddle out prow forward; but in attempting to do this both he and the boat were turned upside down. This happened in four feet of water under which was a treacherous bottom. Providentially this swamp had masses of floating sod covered with grass. One of these was within easy reach, and grasping it with both hands, he sank it under foot. The safe footing thus obtained was much needed, for the canoe was full of water and went right under when he attempted to lift himself in, so that it was necessary to raise it so as to empty at least part of the water back into the swamp.

After succeeding in this he fished up his gun from the bottom of the slough and then he performed the gymnastic feat of re-entering the dugout without getting another spill. Let anyone who thinks that was not much of a trick try to accomplish it under precisely the same conditions. Once in, Mr. Bernie stood up and with the paddle quickly emptied out the remainder of the water. He got back to the fort richer in experience; but his suit, which was the better of the only two he had, never recovered: it lasted, however, until the next autumn. It had to.

The next stage of the journey extended to Methy Portage. This was made in the company of Patrice Lamareaux, Postmaster at that place, who had come to Ile à la Crosse in a boat to get his winter outfit.

At their first encampment the travellers made their evening meal on fried whitefish, potatoes and bread and butter. Mr. Bernie particularly enjoyed the fish, which he freely seasoned with a mixture of salt and pepper, which Mr. Lamareaux kept in a small caribou leather bag. Suddenly he was taken bad with a deathly sickness, which brought to mind an experience of some twenty years before when as a bad little boy he had indulged in his first and last smoke, thereby seemingly causing the laws of gravitation to be reversed so as to irrevocably seal his doom.

On the present occasion he placed a hand over his stomach as if to aid the law of gravitation, and looking helplessly at Mr. Lamareaux, he said, "Mr. Lamareaux, I am sick"; and that gentleman said, "A-a-h, dat is de salt. Eet is vary strong. Drink your tea and dat will soon melt it." Mr. Bernie took his advice, and in two minutes the nauseating sensation was completely gone.

It transpired that this remarkable salt was a product of the North, being obtained in a crystallized form from springs on the Salt River; and all the salt used in the North up to that time and for some years afterwards, was taken from these springs, where it was annually shovelled up into sacks for distribution among the various trading posts of the country. It was regarded by the Company's people as perfectly wholesome. It was, however, considered necessary, in order to make it suited for table use, that it should first be passed through a coffee mill or pounded in a piece of dressed leather. In the sample through which Mr. Bernie became acquainted with the peculiarities of the salt of the North, the pounding had evidently not been thorough.

Some more surprises awaited Mr. Bernie when he arrived at the post of which Mr. Lamareaux was in charge, for he found that he lived in a mud-washed, two-roomed house with a wife and fourteen children. The number of children is given on the authority of the parents, and not from actual count, for they were so incessantly on the move that it was too difficult to count them. Mr. Lamareaux was a French Canadian, but his better half was country born and only half French. Physically she was much more than his better half, being about double his size. They were good Roman Catholics, but that did not prevent them from treating their guest with becoming courtesy during the two days he was with them.

In the outer room of the two mentioned there was to be seen what was very common both for use and ornament in many houses of the North, viz., a fiddle on the wall.

On the matter of religion Mr. Bernie had to be discreetly and politely silent; but that did not commit the violin to silence, and being an amateur performer of no mean order, and knowing that with a violin he could talk religion to the hearts of nine hundred and ninety-nine Metes in a thousand, he took down this particular violin from time to time, and treated the Lamareaux to music both sacred and secular, ranging all the way from Red River Jig to The Song of the Virgin Mary. Seeing the Protestant teacher under these felicitous conditions, Mrs. Lamareaux seemed to be drawn towards him as though he was one of her own brood, and when the hour to continue his journey had arrived she expressed her good-will in a small contribution of Northern delicacies, accompanying the same with a nice little speech in her best English. She said, "I pray *le Bon Dieu*, He keep you good in all de place where you go." To this Mr. Bernie replied with an ingenuousness which went well with her own, "Merci, Madame Lamareaux. I came to you a stranger. I go away a friend, and when I pray to *le Bon Dieu* I shall remember you and the family."

Mr. Bernie then stepped into a birch bark canoe manned by two Chipewyans hired by Mr. Lamareaux to take him as far as Fort Chipewyan. Of the six tribes of the North the Chipewyans are the heaviest in build, and are also fairly tall. They had been represented to Mr. Bernie as the most stolid and selfish as well. The sample with which he had to do on the journey were unselfish enough to furnish him with a paddle, which they encouraged him to use so that he might accelerate the rate of travel to his heart's content, and the sooner reach his objective.

The older Indian, named Gillibois, who was about fifty, took charge as steersman, and the other, named Antoine, who was a sturdy young fellow of about sixteen, took charge at the bow. When Mr. Bernie had seated himself in the centre he found a paddle placed suggestively to hand, and seizing it he plunged it into the water simultaneously with the others, and keeping stroke, the three paddles propelled their canoe down the Clear Water River at a flying speed.

After keeping this up for about twenty minutes, Mr. Bernie placed his paddle across the gunwales and lay back for a brief rest. When he had enjoyed this and the scenery for a few minutes he was suddenly startled with fearfully guttural sounds proceeding from the throat of the Chipewyan behind him—"*Ghur-rah, ghur-rah, ba-goth-a-ra, pimisca, pimisca*" (ghurrah, for the English hurrah; bagothara, the Chipewyan for master; and pimisca, the Cree for pull or paddle).

Mr. Bernie's feelings at being thus gutturally commanded were at first those of surprise, next of indignation, and finally of amusement. Then he calmly reflected that he had to maintain the reputation of an Anglican missionary; and knowing that any attempt to explain to his companions in any language understood by them all, that he paddled as an act of grace and not of obligation, would only be a waste of time, he quietly resolved to go on paddling as he had intended—industriously but not slavishly; so after resting a few minutes longer to impress the fact upon Gillibois that he was more of a *bagothara* than a servant, he suddenly sprang to a sitting posture, and adopting a classy pose so as to catch the exact stroke, he once more deftly plunged his paddle into the Clear Water River, saying

as he did so, *"Ghurrah, ghurrah, bagothara, pimisca, pimisca."* If his paddling was effective the little speech was more so, for presently Antoine's shoulders began to shake and he burst out laughing, and Gillibois himself had to join in. Often afterwards down the Clear Water and then the Athabasca this guttural little speech was repeated, and doubtless helped the travellers to a better understanding of each other's ways and wishes.

At the first night's encampment the travellers tried to get up a conversation in Cree, when they were pleased to find that by persevering they could understand each other much better than at first seemed possible. Mr. Bernie taught the Chipewyans how to pronounce hurrah like an Englishman, and in return they taught him how to pronounce *bagothara* like a Chipewyan. After the travellers had spread out their bedding on the bosom of mother earth, the two Indians, before lying down, repeated the rosary together. It was a perfectly starlit night in September, and as Mr. Bernie listened to Gillibois' remarkable Latin, he raised his eyes to the starry worlds on high, and thought, He who presided there and hears prayer, knows just what this Latin means, and if the spirit that prompts it is that of a little child, perhaps it will be like that other child's prayer:

> Now I lay me down to sleep.
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
> And should I die before I wake
> I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take.

In the middle of an afternoon the travellers arrived at the mouth of the Athabasca, and early as it was they had to camp, owing to a strong wind which rendered the crossing of the lake unsafe. After saying *ayimun*, it's

hard, about half a dozen times, Gillibois settled down stolidly for a good smoke. "Now then," said Mr. Bernie, *"bagothara, pimisca, pimisca."* The old gentleman did not seem favourably impressed with the joke, so Mr. Bernie soothed his nerves with a few tunes on the violin.

By morning the wind had subsided, but there was still considerable swell on the lake. However, Gillibois decided to take a risk, and a start was made. Once fairly out in the open he showed that even a Chipewyan can get excited, and the words, *ayimun* or *pimisca, pimisca,* often escaped his lips. That morning the Indians seemed pretty sure of being able to make the traverse in safety, for they had preened themselves with unusual care, and after scrubbing their faces and liberally anointing their crow-black hair with pomatum, had donned their Sunday pants and clean shirts, and put on new moccasins. Now that Gillibois was so greatly excited, the recollection of that recent regard for his personal appearance afforded Mr. Bernie some confidence, as showing pretty conclusively that the old gentleman, who was a man of experience in navigation by birch bark, had quite made up his mind to reach Fort Chipewyan alive and in presentable condition.

At length Gillibois seemed satisfied that the danger had been passed, and when about a half mile from the fort the paddles were laid down, and while the canoe was being "rocked on the cradle of the deep," the paddlers wiped the perspiration from their faces and the Indians once more smoothed down their raven locks. Then when Gillibois said *"Hao, hao!"* (Now, now!) paddles were again seized, held in position for an instant, then plunged into the water simultaneously, and the canoe shot forward, arriving at the landing in a few minutes with

that éclat which was the regular way in the North for men good and true to arrive at a Hudson's Bay fort.

The population at Fort Chipewyan was about sixty and all but two families were Protestant. There were four officers, of whom one was Mr. Churchill, still in charge of the district. Mr. Thomson, the friend of the Findlays, was also here still, and he and Mr. Bernie at once became friends. On the day after their arrival Mr. Bernie learned from him that Gillibois had been sounding his praises through the fort, saying that he knew it was dangerous to cross the lake as he had done, and that he would not have taken the risk had he not been sure of the men who were with him. "He further says," went on Mr. Thomson, "that you cannot pray like a priest; but he would back you up against the best of them with a gun, a paddle or a fiddle."

"Thank you and him very much," said Mr. Bernie.

This remark was followed by two laughs, one of which was spasmodic.

A little later the confiding disposition of Mr. Thomson led him to tell Mr. Bernie the story of his love affair with Miss Blain, which he wound up with the remark that it was no doubt presumption on his part to have ever dreamed of marriage with a person of Miss Blain's attractiveness.

"Most likely," said Mr. Bernie, "you are over-rating her merits, and you are certainly under-rating your own."

"I don't think so, and at any rate, I am now a modest young man, and the aching void that is here" (putting his hand over his heart) "can be filled by any respectable maiden who is passably fair."

Then followed that laugh, which though normal, did sound as though it might have come from a broken heart.

When Mr. Bernie arrived at Fort Chipewyan he found that a married missionary of the Anglican church had been placed in charge of the work about a month before, and he was occupying the only house Mr. Churchill could spare—a small one only large enough for himself and his wife. It being too late in the season to go elsewhere, the missionary in charge and Mr. Bernie agreed to divide the work, the former continuing to fulfil the duties pertaining to his appointment, while the latter was to start a school whenever a building for the purpose could be found.

In entering upon this arrangement, Mr. Bernie knowingly let himself in for considerable manual labour as well as scholastic work; but the thought of building himself a dwelling place strongly appealed to his pioneering instincts. The Hudson's Bay Company had already donated a piece of land adjoining their own enclosure, as a site for missionary buildings; so it was agreed that Mr. Bernie should make a beginning by building his house thereon.

The cutting and hauling of the material needed was the work of Mr. Bernie himself; but Mr. Churchill generously contributed all the sawn lumber that was needed—about two hundred feet. He also allowed two of the Company's servants to assist for four days. In this manner the house was completed and occupied just three weeks from the day he first swung his axe against a tree with intent to build.

This first Mission house was fifteen feet by twelve. In its north-east corner was an open fire-place; in the

north-west corner was a bed which was fixed to the wall; in the south-west corner was a cupboard which contained less than a dozen cooking utensils and dishes—all that were used in the place. The other furniture was a small book-case, three forms, a large table, a trunk and a chair. In this building Mr. Bernie not only lived and boarded himself, but taught school as well. The daily attendance was made up of twelve boys whose ages ranged from seven to fourteen. Of the year spent by him in teaching these boys he was afterwards heard to say that it was the happiest of his life, chiefly because the parents of the children and others with whom he had to do so thoroughly appreciated his work.

Mr. Bernie was not the sole occupant of his school dwelling-house, as he had brought with him a black water-spaniel all the way from Manitoba, and many were the pleasant tramps which he and Funny took together in quest of ptarmigan and rabbits over the rocks and through the bushes and swamps of Athabasca.

With spring there arrived grey geese, speckled geese and wavies by the million, and for a month Mr. Bernie did not have to draw on the Company for a meat ration. Standing at the door of his house, or in a drift-wood stand only forty rods distant, he succeeded in bringing down all the wavies that he needed.

Some grey geese nested in the vicinity of Fort Chipewyan, and the Indians sometimes brought in goose eggs and those of other water-fowl, which they disposed of in barter to the people of the fort. One forenoon a Chipewyan called on Mr. Bernie at the seminary while he was in the midst of his scholastic duties and made him a present, Indian fashion, of a few goose eggs, and

in return Mr. Bernie presented him with a cake of toilet soap, as his outward appearance plainly showed that such an article would be useful.

Mr. Bernie had a scant supply of just three luxuries —flour, sugar and dried apples, and on Sundays and gala days he indulged in pancakes, the ingredients in which were simply water and flour. The Indian's present of goose eggs was, therefore, very suitable indeed, as much so as the soap; and as Mr. Bernie stowed them away in the article of furniture in the south-west corner of the seminary, "Now for it," thought he. "As soon as I am through with these boys, there are going to be some pancakes made and eaten in this establishment—*pancakes made with eggs.*"

Teaching was resumed. Suddenly a very tiny squeak, coming from where nobody could tell, caused one of the boys to exclaim, *"Mah!"* the Cree equivalent to hearken. For a minute everybody looked up and down and around, but as nothing more was heard, work was resumed again. No sooner, however, was that done, than the sound was repeated a little louder than before. Then the children looked at the cupboard and from it to their teacher, and one whispered, *"apukoosisuk"* (mice), and another, *"piyesisuk"* (birds), but it was the third boy who hit the nail on the head when he whispered, *"wawa"* (the eggs). Then there was a laugh in which the domino joined, but his heart was not in the laugh, for as he walked to the cupboard to examine his audible eggs, there was fading from his mind the vision of a feast on *pancakes made with eggs.*

When spring had merged into summer the boats arrived from Fort Simpson, and among those on board

was Mr. McKinistry, an old college friend of Mr. Bernie's, who was now a clerk in the Company's service. He lost no time in calling upon Mr. Bernie, whom he found busy at the open fire-place preparing tea; and he accepted his invitation to stay and help him dispose of some pancakes and birch syrup. As they chatted and laughed over former experiences, the stage was reached where the first pancake was ready to be turned. This fact Mr. Bernie announced to his guest with the remark: "I have acquired one or two valuable arts since leaving college which we did not study there. This is one of them. See here!" And shaking the pancake to make sure that it was not adhering to the pan, he tossed it upwards so that it nearly touched the roof-poles of his humble abode. When it came down it lit for a little while on the farther edge of the frying-pan, whence, before it could be secured by the cook, it overbalanced into the fire. When Mr. Bernie had raked the defaulting pancake on to the hearth, he made a poor attempt to join in the laughter which was almost convulsing his guest, while Funny, the other witness of the mishap, looked first at the pancake and then at her master with an expression which plainly said, "I think that's for me," and Mr. Bernie, pushing it towards her, said, "All right, Funny."

CHAPTER TEN

Mr. Bernie at Fort Simpson

After having enjoyed a winter in the district fort, or as one might say, the capital of Athabasca, with its special facilities for acquiring a knowledge of life in the North, Mr. Bernie was now to have the advantage duplicated by the opportunity of putting in his next winter at Fort Simpson, the head fort or capital of the MacKenzie River district. Mr. Snow, who was now in charge of the Anglican Mission, was in a position to make such an arrangement, and it suited Mr. Bernie admirably, who wished to put in a winter in what he regarded as the heart of the North, before going elsewhere. Accordingly he joined the MacKenzie River brigade when it returned from Methy Portage on its way northward.

The officer in charge of the brigade was a well educated gentleman of a genial disposition, and he invited Mr. Bernie to take his meals with Mr. McKinistry and himself, and to share their sternsheets in the day and their tent at night. As it happened the three of them could play the violin; so there was no lack of music on the way.

Among the voyageurs there was a chance man of English, Scottish or French extraction; but nine-tenths of them were Slavie, Dogrib or Tukudh, and these were arranged like the cargoes—with a particular regard to the fort to which they might happen to belong, an arrangement which saved unnecessary changing and

re-assorting, and also gave a crew a special interest in their own boat and its contents.

At Fort Simpson Mr. Bernie made or renewed acquaintance with five missionaries, and double that number of Hudson's Bay officers, all of whom were stationed in various parts of the MacKenzie River district. As he listened to some of these gentlemen giving their experiences of the North, he felt that though their lives may have been somewhat monotonous, they had at any rate been varied with some worthwhile adventures and useful work.

While staying at Fort Simpson Mr. Bernie never had occasion to practise the culinary art, as there were two ladies in the Mission, and a manservant and a maid. With a fine library placed at his disposal, and a quiet study all to himself, he studied to advantage, under Mr. Snow, the Beaver Indian language, the Greek Testament and theology. In return he assisted Mr. Snow in his pastoral duties and took full charge when his itinerating work called him northward early in the spring.

Mr. Bernie made the discovery that the farther North one went the more did the question of an adequate food supply force itself to the front. At Fort Simpson, as at some other Missions, the daily ration of meat, fish or fowl had to come chiefly from the Company's store, and the Company's store was replenished mainly from the vast herds of caribou which every winter shortly before Christmas passed southward on the east side of the MacKenzie River. Until this southward trek of the caribou took place the daily ration consisted of fish, pounded meat or rabbits. The nearest fishery was at Great Slave Lake, and the fish which reached Fort Simpson from that source were of the kind known as

"hung fish." These are caught in autumn in open water and hung up on stages by their tails for future use. The Fort Simpson assignment was thrown into a York boat just before freeze-up and floated down the MacKenzie to their destination. Their condition by that time might be described as stale or high, although in the vulgar tongue of the less thankful of the inhabitants it was not infrequently spoken of as rotten. When rabbits were plentiful, rations supplied from that source, especially if mixed in with a little grease, were more acceptable to the uninitiated than the fish. Unfortunately rabbits are subject to an epidemic which reduces their numbers every seventh year within ten per cent. of extinction, and this approach to annihilation had occurred the year before Mr. Bernie wintered at Fort Simpson. Therefore the only other food which the officer in charge could supply for the relief of stomachs rebelliously inclined was dried caribou—caribou more stale than the fish, for it was caribou returned to dust—by an artificial process it is true. That is to say the more fleshy parts of caribou had been sliced thin, dried and then pounded to dust in very strong leather sacks, and very appropriately named pounded meat. Mixed with grease, this pounded meat became pemmican; but in the far North the grease was often not to be had, in which case the inhabitants had to get the dust down the best way they could; and somehow the swallowing process did not seem to be made much easier by stewing or boiling—the thing called for grease, and that winter mostly called in vain. However, the sawdust-like pounded meat gave forth no unpleasing odour, in which respect it may be said that it didn't *rank* as *high* as the hung fish, and then again, in all fairness, it may be said that it ranked higher.

In order to bring about some amelioration of food conditions as far as the Mission was concerned, Mr. Bernie turned his skill in hunting to some account by setting snares for rabbits and lynx along the paths where he was wont to take his daily exercise on snowshoes. In this manner the Mission people were supplied with an occasional meal of rabbits, and on more rare occasions with the much greater luxury—a piece of roast lynx.

A lynx, it must be frankly admitted, is neither more nor less than a cat; and in those days it was usually spoken of in the North as a "wild cat" or *pissio* (cat in Cree). The lynx is about six times the size of its domestic relative. It may sound strange to the reader, nevertheless there can be no more sane or truthful statement made in this or any other book, than that the flesh of the lynx makes most delicious eating, very much resembling that of the finest turkey both in colour and flavour. The ladies of the Mission party had but to get one good taste of lynx flesh, and then any prejudices they may have had against it were gone forever. Mr. Snow, however, was rather puzzling over this matter, for considering that he had boarded for a whole winter with the Eskimo, it was to be expected that there would be few kinds of food eaten in the North which he would call common or unclean, and perhaps after all, it was only a camouflage of his unselfishness when he said to the ladies that they were welcome to his share, as he had little use for cats dead or alive.

Very soon after the caribou reached the vicinity of Fort Simpson in their movement southward, the fact was made known by Slavies who arrived with fresh venison, including two great delicacies of the North—caribou tongues and marrow fat. The latter was brought

in raw and just as it was taken from the bone, and being frozen stiff when it was handed in, it did not look unlike long sticks of candy. To use these sticks, the common practice was to warm them enough to take out the frost, and eat them with lean meat in *lieu* of fat or with bannock in place of butter.

As soon as the deer arrived five men with as many dog-trains were assigned the work of hauling in meat for the fort.

The toll taken out of the caribou herds that winter by the Slavies trading at Fort Simpson must have mounted into the tens of thousands. One day when the deer hunting season was past, Mr. Bernie happened to stray into the Company's provision store and there he beheld a pile of caribou tongues five or six feet high and thirty or forty feet in circumference; and, tongue-tied for a little, at the sight, he found himself speculating on the probable size of a hill which might be made up of the caribou tongues taken in the North.

Mr. Bernie himself, by way of a holiday, went on a deer hunt just before Christmas. He was accompanied by the Mission servant, a young Tukudh named John Tindle, who, like himself, felt the lure of the chase when word reached the fort that deer were numerous at no great distance.

John could speak English after a fashion, and he often visited Mr. Bernie in his room to hear of things going on beyond the confines of his own little world, and in return he gave Mr. Bernie much interesting information about how his people lived in their distant part of the North.

John's chief work for the Mission was to haul enough cordwood to keep the four Mission fires burning. For

this purpose he was provided with a train of four dogs, the oldest of which was well known as Grog, and the other three, which were said to be Grog's grandchildren, were always spoken of by John as "the puppies."

It was nine o'clock one morning when Mr. Bernie and John set out on their deer hunt. So short are the days in that latitude that it was after ten o'clock when the sun made its appearance. At the time of starting the thermometer stood at fifty below zero; but owing to the absence of wind it did not seem very cold.

The journey was in an eastward direction and began by the crossing of the MacKenzie River, which at this point is exactly a mile wide.

Although the travellers had a well beaten path they used their snowshoes, because snowshoes give one the advantage of an even footing and a slight spring, and necessitate long steps, resulting in easier and faster travelling. The speed that day was quite four miles an hour. After travelling nine miles they stopped for lunch, then went six miles farther and camped. They were then fairly into the country over which the caribou had passed, and the snow in every direction was trodden down as hard as a board. As Mr. Bernie looked over these indications of a vast herd of creatures having moved over this country only a few days before, it seemed almost incredible that he and John in travelling all day to reach the place had seen only two live things besides Grog and his progeny, viz., a mouse which crossed their path some miles from the river, and a whisky-jack, which after the manner of its kind seemed to spring from nowhere, and had sociably joined them in their noon-day meal.

As they advanced the country became increasingly barren, and they were glad when at sunset they found themselves beside a hollow where a scrub growth of jack pine, birch and willow promised shelter and fuel sufficient for a good encampment.

The next morning they started at day-break to search for a stray herd of caribou, leaving Grog and the puppies to take care of the camp. To Mr. Bernie's question as to whether the dogs might not leave if left untied, John replied, "No fear, sir. Grog he's ver wise dog and the puppies aloos does same as Grog he does."

When the hunters had gone southward about three miles they swerved to the left to ascend a ridge from which they might scan the surrounding country, and on reaching its crest and looking on the hollow below they saw a herd of about thirty deer feeding near some clumps of scrub. By making a detour so as to get the scrub between themselves and the deer they succeeded in approaching unseen to within fifty yards of them, and there, standing side by side, they raised their guns and took aim, and at a word from Mr. Bernie they fired together. Two deer fell and the rest scampered away without being followed by another shot, it having been agreed beforehand that no more than two deer were to be killed.

After assisting Mr. Bernie to place the deer on their backs—the proper posture for skinning—John went after the dogs and sleigh, and returned before Mr. Bernie had finished skinning the second deer. John claimed that he had cut up hundreds of caribou in his time, and the manner in which he dissected these two clearly showed that he was no novice at the business.

Although legs, heads and other appurtenances were left behind, the load was a heavy one for Grog and the puppies, and John had to stop them several times for a breathing spell. At such times he would make them some such speech as the following, "Never mind, Grog, you and your grandchildren going to have a big feast tonight. You'll fill your bellies good and tomorrow the load not be near so heavy." Later on it will be seen that John practised what he preached.

The camp was reached as the sun was setting, and the first thing that John did was to fulfil his promise to Grog and the puppies by giving them all the meat they could hold.

After a good supply of wood had been collected, and everything made snug for the night, John proceeded to get tea, and as they had not eaten since morning, they were very hungry. John had frankly owned to Mr. Bernie before this that he ate too much, and that gentleman was aware before he made the confession, that, dividing the food used by the Mission party of six adults into as many parts, five of the party used three and a half of the parts and John put away the other two and a half, and that he sometimes made up for the insufficiency of the two and a half parts by catching *loche* under the ice of the MacKenzie River. The *loche* is a scaleless fish which resembles the eel in appearance and flavour, and it has a large and delicious liver.

When John sliced off six large steaks from a caribou thigh and fastened them on as many ponasks, he fittingly remarked, "Me too, I feel I help to make the load light."

As Mr. Bernie looked at the six or seven pounds of venison roasting before the fire he smiled and remarked, "Fine looking meat that, John, and lots of it."

"Yes sir, and I hope you hungry. Me, I just starved."

When the steaks were done, John planted three of them before Mr. Bernie, and retained the other three for himself. Mr. Bernie took a steak and placing it on the tin plate before him divided it into five pieces, one of which kept him well employed while John was polishing off a whole steak. When he had finished his three, Mr. Bernie handed him another, which he accepted with a show of reluctance but nevertheless sent after the others without any sign of failing appetite. After this, John paused for a minute and then said, "I not so hungry now; but I nearly aloos hungry. I eat, and I eat, and I eat, and then I hungry again. The doctor, he say it becos I have worroms." Then he said to Mr. Bernie, "Why you not eat the other steak, sir?" And Mr. Bernie replied, "Thank you, John, I have all I want. I expect that my doctor was cleverer than yours and that my worms are dead." Thereupon John leisurely proceeded to demolish steak number five. On the following morning the dogs were not given the chance to lighten the load any more, as dogs when working are fed only after their day's work is done; but their driver laboured under no such disadvantage, and he put away nearly as much venison as on the evening before. When the dogs started out on the homeward haul they stepped out in such fine style that John laughed and exclaimed, "Wah-wha, sure 'nough the load is lighter!" However, though the load was unquestionably lighter, going in took them three hours longer than coming out, and it was six o'clock when they

arrived at the Mission, which at that season in that latitude is four hours after sunset.

Among other acquaintances formed by Mr. Bernie at Fort Simpson was that of the man previously mentioned as having aided in the building of the beautiful church at Stanley Mission. He was a good man. His trade was that of carpenter, and he had built many houses and York boats for the Hudson's Bay Company. Having grown old in the service and spent a good many years in the North, he was able to give Mr. Bernie much interesting information.

One evening Mr. Bernie visited him with a list of the most northern trading posts, extending all the way from Fort McPherson southwards right into the Ile à la Crosse district. Sitting with pencil in hand he jotted down such important facts as the following: the place each fort was situated; name of officer known to have been or at present in charge of the post, also assistant officer or officers, if any; also stating the nationality of each officer and whether married or unmarried, and giving the nationalities of the wives also.

Going over the information thus obtained Mr. Bernie was able to tabulate the following interesting particulars: of the fifty officers named, known to have been or at the time known to be stationed at the respective posts, twenty-five were married. In regard to nationality, thirteen came from Great Britain, of whom three were English and ten were Scottish, six were French Canadian, and thirty-one were of English or Scottish extraction and hailed principally from the Red River Settlement. Of the twenty-five wives, two came from Great Britain, of whom one was English and one Scottish, two were native

women, fifteen were of English, Scottish or French extraction and were born in the North, and six were of English and Scottish extraction and came from the Red River Settlement.

Considering the heterogeneous character of the occupants of the Hudson's Bay establishments, it is wonderful that they got along as harmoniously as they did. Perhaps it was that after squabbling or feeling in the right frame so to do, they who were so afflicted went out and breathed the pure air of the vast open stretches of the North, and when their disturbed spirits communed with the good angels who frequent those regions, their troubles, real or imaginary, evaporated and they returned whence they came, prepared once more to be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving. There is no doubt, however, that domestic and community strife was largely thwarted by the practical *bagothara chok*, district manager, to whom cases of misconduct or insubordination were bound to be reported, and who could generally contrive to make changes which lessened the danger of mischief-making in his district. Considering that the arm of the law could hardly be said to extend to the North in any but a theoretical or imaginary sense, the residents there were highly to be commended for living together as peaceably as they did. During the good many years that Mr. Bernie lived there, there were no cases of bloodshed except on the rare occasions when an angry man might with his fist draw a little blood from the nasal appendage of some refractory brother.

When troubles did arise the missionary was very liable to hear of it, for the rule, "if thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone," was no better observed in the North than in the

South, the East or the West, and all kinds of brothers were liable to be told before the right one; and sometimes, when the church was told, it was as a first instead of a third resource. Thus, on one occasion, Mr. Bernie had to listen painfully to the complaint of an offended wife, and when he tremblingly approached the husband, the old scamp simply laughed and said, "Don't you worry, Mr. Bernie, she gets like that periodically. She'll get over it!" And that was the end of that.

Another woman was continually lashing out with her tongue at her husband, who was a most estimable man, until being utterly unable to stand it any longer, he gave way to the old Adam, and letting her have it square between the eyes, sent her reeling to the floor, whence she picked herself up, a bawling and very much astonished woman.

In the following instance the balance of power was with the wife. Her husband was a feather-weight while she was a well-knit heavy-weight. One day her husband in the presence of a boat's crew dared to say something to her about keeping her place, whereupon she very soon put him in his. She threw him down, and pulling off her legging rubbed it over his mouth, the greatest humiliation, it was considered, that any man could suffer at the hands of a woman.

As a final instance showing that the people of the North did have their little troubles, we take the case of two men, who, with their little families, occupied together a one-roomed house. One of these men was saying things to his wife which the other considered unbecoming, and to which he ventured to object, saying that if he had as good a wife he would treat her better than that. The

interference being resented, a fight ensued, in which the interfering man downed the other, and getting hold of his head, sounded the floor several times therewith, and their wives meanwhile, strange to say, acted as neutrals, though they must have been very much interested.

Troubles of this kind in many other parts of the world might have led to divorce. In Mr. Bernie's time a case of permanent separation was extremely rare, and was most likely to occur after the dissatisfied parties had left the North and gone to where there was less time and space in which to cool off after one of their periodic tiffs.

On one of the evenings when Mr. Bernie was chatting with the good old carpenter referred to a little way back, he asked him for his opinion as to the kind of marriages which had worked out most happily in the North, where, necessarily, marriages were of such a mixed character; and the answer which he gave at considerable length, Mr. Bernie afterwards found agreed in the main with his own conclusions, which, briefly stated, were as follows: Of all mixtures the least desirable is that of a marriage between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant. As regards a mixture of nationalities, there was none happier than a marriage of an Englishman or a Scotsman to a Cree woman, but the time was come when such marriages were not to be encouraged, neither the intermarrying among themselves of the hybrid races. Such would be acting in the best interests of their progeny were they to go back to the superior of the races whence they sprang, by marrying Whites, thus aiding nature to work out its beneficent law of the survival of the fittest.

Unfortunately, however, this is not a matter in which men and women can always do what they know would be

best, and therefore have to be satisfied with doing the best they can, and when they honourably stay with that, come what will, they will never have just cause for self-reproach either in this world or the next. The truth of this statement, at least as far as one's experience extends in this world, will be strikingly illustrated before the end of this book is reached.

While he was at Fort Simpson an aged Postmaster told Mr. Bernie some interesting stories about the Sikanni Indians who live on the banks of the rivers so named—north of the Liard and west of the MacKenzie. They are the one tribe who have strenuously objected to the exploitation of their country by the Whites, claiming that it would mean spoliation. The following story impressed Mr. Bernie as justifying the suspicion that the attitude of the Nahannis towards the Whites was one of bitter hostility. This is the aged Postmaster's story:

"An Englishman by the name of Dan Hardy arrived one spring at Fort Liard. He had been trading, trapping and prospecting for some years among the Sikannis west of the Rockies, and he could speak their language quite well. I was in charge of Fort Liard when he arrived there, and when I found that he intended going up the South Nahanni River to prospect for gold, I told him of the serious risk he would incur in doing so. However, he would not be advised, and he placed some more ammunition, tea and tobacco in his dugout and went on. He was a likeable fellow and a regular gentleman, and I would give a good deal to know what became of him. I asked the Nahannis about him until I found that they did not like it. One old Nahanni, who was really a fine fellow, admitted having seen him, and that he could speak Nahanni like one of themselves; that he knew he had

given medicine to a sick child who had soon recovered. He admitted that he was a good man and that he liked him and had sold him some moccasins: but he plainly showed that he did not want to be questioned, and although I have seen him several times since, the subject has never been resumed. One thing which Dan Hardy said to me just before we parted came to my mind when the old Nahanni spoke of his giving medicine to a sick child, and that he liked him. It was this—'Once the Nahannis get a taste of my medicine and listen to my lovely Nahanni lingo, I think we shall get along together.' "

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Mr. Bernie Journeys to the Peace River

After Mr. Snow had gone northward in the spring Mr. Bernie remained in charge of the Mission at Fort Simpson for six weeks, and then when the MacKenzie River brigade went southward he joined it as far as Fort Chipewyan. Finding the Mission there vacant he took charge until the boats returned from the south with the annual supplies. During the few weeks of his stay there he again lived in the little house he had built, and the residents of the fort showed in their own undemonstrative way that they remembered his stay with them, and his work, and they were glad to see him back. The parents of the children he had taught hoped that he had returned to resume his educational work, and were disappointed on learning that his stay was to last only until autumn, when he was to go up the Peace River and establish a Mission among the Beaver Indians.

The Peace River brigade consisted of four boats, and was in charge of our old friend, Mr. George Stait. Their cargoes were to be divided among the five Peace River trading posts. These posts were at this time being in part supplied by a new route *via* Edmonton and Lesser Slave Lake.

It being in the month of September when this voyage up the Peace River was made, many flocks of ducks and geese were on the wing. And while going up the Quatre Fourches River, Mr. Bernie and a young Roman Catholic priest and a young and new clerk, Mr. Martin, did some

shooting and several birds were brought down; but owing to the keenness and greenness of the two latter, it may be said that the boatmen got as good sport as did the sportsmen themselves.

The boats had just made their exit from the Quatre Fourches into the much wider Peace River when a large flock of wavies were noticed coming directly towards Mr. Stait's boat. The sail was up at the time and stretched to full capacity so as to make the most of a feeble wind. On came the wavies, rising slightly, but not swerving to right or left. Mr. Martin planted his feet firmly in the sternsheets, while the Père ducked under the sail to have full scope on the other side, and while making this move, in his hurry and excitement, he kicked Mr. Bernie's powder flask into the river. Just then, bang, bang, went Mr. Martin's gun; and a second later, bang, bang, went the Père's gun, and the wavies *all* continued on their way, apparently frightened but not in the least hurt. Then the boatmen were convulsed with laughter, for it was seen that Mr. Martin had shot a hole through the sail the size of a dinner plate. Mr. Martin being only an *Ookimasis* (a little master), and so green at that, no one hesitated to laugh; and all that he could do was to stare at the hole and grin. The other two, who did not seem much disposed to laugh, were the two missionaries, for doubtless their thoughts were upon the powder flask now resting peacefully for all time at the bottom of the Peace River. When, therefore, the boisterous fun of the others had subsided, the Père, speaking in his Frenchified English, said shamefacedly to Mr. Bernie, "Your poder is in de reever." "Yes," replied that gentleman, "I noticed it take the fatal plunge." That ended the incident, and the courteous

speech with which Mr. Bernie was prepared to accept an apology from the Père was not needed, which goes to show that a man may be a priest or any other kind of a professional—and born a Frenchman at that—and yet fail to be a gentleman.

Though the Père had nothing further to say about the "poder in de reever," the crew of Mr. Stait's boat had, for they were not superior to the superstitious belief which may date back to the time of Jonah, that the casting overboard of something valuable will propitiate the god or spirit of the weather, and as the wounded sail at this time was only holding its own against the current, the boatmen expressed the hope that the powder flask might be accepted as an offering, and that the *na-moo-wa-na* (fair wind) would soon beat the current. At this juncture a young fellow who owned a flint-lock which looked older than himself, said that to make sure, he would send his gun after the flask, as one was not of much use without the other. Then placing himself in position with one foot on the gunwale and the other on a package of goods, he grasped his gun near the muzzle, and looked around upon his companions who supposed that all this was but a joke; but when he had invoked the spirit of *namoowana,* he swung the gun three times round his head and then threw it with all his might towards the centre of the river. For an instant a gasp of astonishment interrupted the laughing as everyone gazed at the spot where the gun had disappeared. Then while preparations were being made to lower the sail and take to the tracking line, a strange thing happened—that kind of thing which happens just often enough to keep superstition alive. Suddenly someone who happened to look behind shouted "vent derriere!" And another

shouted "namoowana!" and from that time and for the next five hours the boats made satisfactory speed against the current, while the delighted voyageurs lay back and wondered; some of them, no doubt, studying how they could touch up the story when regaling their friends with an account of their voyage. And in the meantime, Mr. Bernie reflected without one little crumb of comfort, that as most of the men were Roman Catholics, the man who kicked the powder into the river would probably get more credit for the fair wind than he who had furnished the ammunition.

On a lovely evening three weeks after leaving Fort Chipewyan, the fort where Mr. Findlay was in charge hove in sight. Here Mr. Bernie's voyage ended, as it was in this neighbourhood that he was to establish a Mission. Mr. George Kidd, still next in command to Mr. Findlay, was also stationed here; but it now required separate quarters to hold him and his, for since last heard from he had been to the Red River Settlement on a year's furlough, and while there had married Miss Linden, and now, like the Findlays, the Kidds were raising a family.

Through the kindness of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Findlay it had been arranged that Mr. Bernie was to be provided for in the fort for the first year, or in fact, until he erected a dwelling-house in connection with the Mission. This arrangement the Findlays carried out in a most generous manner, often impressing upon him the fact that he was their guest as well as the guest of the Company. Mr. Bernie had met Mr. Findlay before and had been well acquainted with Mrs. Findlay before her marriage. The year he spent with them was a most happy one. They had six children, who inherited the kind and likeable disposition of their parents, and it was

a pleasure to Mr. Bernie to assist in their education. Mr. Findlay and Mr. Bernie were men of like spirit, and as they passed the long wintry evenings before the cheerful fire, often going far afield to find suitable subjects of conversation, there steadily grew up between them a strong and enduring friendship.

During the first month after his arrival Mr. Bernie's time was wholly taken up in teaching the Indians and ministering to their sick. By the end of that time they had all received their winter supplies and departed for their hunting grounds, leaving behind them the few who were too ill or too old to follow.

It was then that Mr. Bernie looked around and selected the site of the first Anglican Mission on the Peace River. He had often heard the Company's employees speak in praise of the scenery of the Peace River country, and the more he saw of it the more did he concur in their opinions.

In the land selected for the Mission, the scenery was pleasant, and a combination of bush and prairie and an undulating surface were alike favourable for house-building and the cultivation of the soil.

During the ten years spent in faithful work at this place he had some disappointing experiences, yet he never regretted having entered on missionary work, and when dark hours came to him, as they are bound to come to every earthly pilgrim, he could lift up his eyes and see the light still shining ahead.

He built a dwelling-house and a church, doing the greater part of the work in person. He also worked a small farm and was instrumental in the establishment of a good school.

These things were beneficial to the community of his own time, and he believed they would be a nucleus of greater things as the country developed; but in regard to the *Tsaotini* (Beaver people), whose temporal and spiritual betterment was the intention of the establishment of the Mission, he concluded by the time he had worked one year among them, that he was engaged in a forlorn hope. In the first place the whole tribe was hopelessly impregnated with scrofula, and in the second place the Roman Catholic priest of the powder flask incident was located only two miles away, and who could blame the poor Beaver if being honestly perplexed, he halted between two opinions?

It did not appeal to Mr. Bernie as a worthy discharge of his duties as a missionary to try to undo the work of the Père, yet from the nature of the case he found himself committed to a course which made it look as though such was the primary object. In his own perplexity over this question he could only hope and pray that from the teaching of both himself and the Père the poor Indian would grasp the saving truth that there is only one salvation for all, viz., that wrought out on the cross of Calvary.

When Mr. Bernie found out the awful extent to which the Beavers were affected with scrofula, he went seriously into the study of the whole matter, and, assisted by Mr. Findlay in securing data from the books of the Hudson's Bay Company, he arrived at the startling conclusion that if these Indians continued to be decimated by disease at the same rate as during the past half century, there would not be one left on the banks of the Peace River by the year 1950.

After this discovery of what was liable to happen, the next question was what could be done to prevent it?

Had the Hudson's Bay Company been able to carry out their monopolistic policy up to the time of the transfer, it would have been better for the health of the Beavers, for the keen opposition which the Company encountered on the Peace River was as hurtful to the Indians as to the Company's business. Add to this the fact that placer gold mining was at one time carried on in the upper waters of the Peace River; and if these things were not actually responsible for the beginning of the disease, they at least contributed to its spread.

At the time of the transfer anyone who knew the facts could not but see that the Beavers were in a bad way, and that if not helped they would perish quickly; and, of course, the obligation to help them now rested more with the Canadian Government than the Hudson's Bay Company. Be it said, however, the Company cheerfully co-operated with the Government, giving the benefit of its experience in as disinterested a manner as could reasonably have been expected. Having the facilities for doing so, they disbursed the bounty of the Government, which consisted largely of flour. When an Indian appeased his hunger on a half-baked bannock made only of flour and water, it was not conducive to health. Mr. Bernie never wondered when an Indian came to him with his hand over his stomach, saying, "*A-ha-i, sa pot ta-ti!*" (my stomach's sick). And often he could see that it was the beginning of the end, even though "*yu oochu*" (good medicine) was given and afforded temporary relief. With so little to help him and so much to help his disease, that Indian would not go on much longer until he would take to his

bed, and as soon as he did that he would at once say, "I am going to die," and so he would.

One evening when this matter was being discussed after tea at the Findlay's, where the Kidds and Mr. Bernie were present, Mrs. Findlay said to her husband with emotion, "Oh, William, cannot something be done to save these poor creatures? Why do you not get up some kind of an agitation that will rouse the Government to do something more for the Beavers than simply put dough into their stomachs?"

To this Mr. Findlay replied, speaking seriously and with deliberation. "As an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, which recently occupied much the position which the Canadian Government occupies today, I can sympathize with it, realizing the seriousness of the problem with which it is confronted as guardian of the Indian tribes, for it has to consult the will of the Whites as well as the wishes of the Indians. While it is true that both justice and compassion demand much in behalf of the Indian, the Government has to study the good of all, and even in the direction of charity or philanthropy must not lay itself open to the charge of being visionary and extravagant. In short, it has to keep itself within the bounds of practical statesmanship, and it would not do that very long were it to give way to the wishes of the Indians and some of their well-meaning friends."

"Now, Will," said Mrs. Findlay, "it is just like you to put in a word for the miserable sinner when he is on trial; but don't you think that this time you have excelled yourself? No doubt the Government likes to live; so do the Beavers, and it is up to the former not simply to live and let live, but to live and help live."

Mr. and Mrs. Kidd agreed with Mrs. Findlay. In fact all were agreed that help was urgently needed, and that the longer it was delayed the less effective it would be when given.

Mr. Bernie then spoke of the result of a correspondence he had had with a learned doctor. This doctor wrote that under ideal conditions the Beaver Indians could be cured of the malady in the course of two or three generations; but that in order to obtain such conditions it would first of all be necessary to produce a change of heart in the Whites, and in his opinion that was harder than curing scrofula. Practically this would be their answers to such a scheme—the cost would be too great: it would not be worth the trouble: such philanthropic schemes as we can afford to help must be susceptible of surer, quicker and larger results.

So ended this discussion on the physical salvation of the Beavers, and Mr. Bernie worked on among them as before, and sometimes wished for their sakes that he was a millionaire. For while a person who is helpless through sickness and poverty may listen to teaching about the prospect of eternal relief, naturally he will appreciate it more if meanwhile you can give him a foretaste in healing and food and clothing and warmth. It is hard for us to believe in the angels up there unless, once in a while, an angel ministers unto us down here. The help given by the good ladies of the fort was a ministration of angels. Take the following as an instance. A babe of a few months is very ill. It is the first-born of an apparently healthy young couple who are camped near the fort. Mr. Bernie, knowing it is dying, comes to see it once more. When he enters the lodge he finds the angels of mercy there before him. They had consulted together

before now about the little one, and the best-known remedies had been freely provided; but all in vain. And now its last moment on earth draws near. The parents with bowed heads, and hand clasped in hand, are seated side by side on the ground, while their tears flow plentifully. As a sign of the inexpressible grief to which she has abandoned herself, the mother has allowed her abundant, raven-black hair to fall around her till it reaches the ground, almost completely covering her own body and that of her dying babe. And as the professional missionary looks from this pathetic sight to the tear-stained faces of his two fellow missionaries, he quietly says, we do need the help of the Omnipotent to enable us this day to throw out the Christian challenge, "Oh death, where is thy sting?" Then they three kneel together while he reads a short prayer from his Beaver Indian manual, commending the soul of the little one to the tender keeping of *Na-gha Tgha* (our Father).

There was no great satisfaction resulting from the relief work Mr. Bernie undertook, because too often it was a prolonging instead of a removing of misery. As a case in point, take that of a Beaver Indian girl fourteen years of age, who, owing to spinal trouble, could travel only on her hands and knees, and whose only relatives were a grandfather at least one hundred years of age, and an uncle who was a cripple. When these were going away in the autumn they told her to go to the English minister and ask his assistance. The outcome of this advice was that one fine afternoon in autumn she arrived at the Mission, having crawled two miles to get there. She looked up into Mr. Bernie's face as though amused at his surprise, and told him that in coming to him to be

helped she had followed the advice of her grandfather. Mr. Bernie had been kind to the old man on account of his great age; but as he looked upon the helpless granddaughter seated on the ground outside his door, he regarded her presence there as an objectionable evidence of the old man's confidence in his friendship. He told the girl how impossible it would be for her to stay in the house, as he was quite alone, and that it was beyond his means to find her a lodge and furnish her with fuel and food. However, for the night he allowed her a corner in the kitchen, and by morning he had decided that he could not send her crawling away as she had come.

It ended in his making her a tent and furnishing her with clothes and bedding. During winter he took her three meals daily and supplied her with fuel. Every evening he held a short service with her, never omitting to sing a hymn. She grew more helpless towards spring, and died before the flowers were in bloom. She was the first to be buried beside the church.

A final case may be mentioned to show what was the usual prospect when ministering to a sick Beaver Indian. Among the Beavers of this district was a fine old couple who had had fourteen children, some of whom had grown to adult age; but when Mr. Bernie made their acquaintance they had only one left—their youngest—a son, then fifteen years of age and far gone in consumption, the disease of which the others had died. The affection of the parents for this last son was profoundly touching, and Mr. Bernie invoked every power human and divine in his behalf; but what was asked was not to be, and he passed on to the great beyond. After his body had been committed to the earth his father stood

on the bank of the Peace River, and after looking at this ever rolling stream as though he in some way connected it with the passing away of his children, he raised his eyes to heaven and cried aloud his *Nunc Dimittis, "Nun-ni Ti-ke-a-oo-li"*—Thou maker of all things, Thou hast taken away my children, now take me also.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Dan Hardy Comes to Life

A few days after the event just recorded, Mr. Bernie was much cheered by one of a very different kind. The "ever rolling stream" which bears so many friends away, showed that it was amenable to the law of compensation by bringing him some people who made him happy and became his very good friends.

One evening in the last days of July, after working an hour in the garden, he was about to enter the house to prepare his evening meal, when he heard voices below the bank, and on looking over the edge he saw a raft from which a man had evidently just landed, while a woman and two girls were in the act of following.

Mr. Bernie quickly descended to their level and told them that though they were strangers, he was none the less pleased to have them tie up opposite his abode. Asking the common question of the North, "Do you come from far?" the man of the party informed him that they had floated down on the raft from Fort St. John's, and that they had reached that point overland from the country of the Nahannis. That information, supported by the complexion of the ladies of the party, brought to mind the story of the aged Postmaster at Fort Simpson, respecting an Englishman who had mysteriously disappeared from Fort Liard, and by way of a plunge, Mr. Bernie said, "So then, you are the Mr. Dan Hardy who about ten years ago put in for a few days at Fort

Liard, and then went on down-stream to prospect for gold along the Nahanni River, and who having failed to return to that or any other Hudson's Bay post, caused considerable speculation as to his possible fate?"

"I am that Dan Hardy," said the gentleman addressed, "and as you may see, nothing very serious has befallen me; on the contrary I have been successful in my prospecting. Let me introduce you to my wife and daughters."

"I am very happy to make the acquaintance of you all, and hope you intend to camp with me for the night."

"I thankfully accept your invitation. We have come to you to secure the benefit of your services as a clergyman; but I shall tell you all about that after we have pitched our tent."

"I wish I could save you that trouble, but the only bed in the Mission house is the one occupied by myself. I would, however, enjoy your company at tea, so while you are pitching your tent I shall go in and prepare tea for five."

Dan Hardy was a man of striking appearance. He was tall, erect, vigorous, moving as if on springs, had a red and flowing beard, and with it all had that air of refinement which no amount of "roughing it" can ever wholly obliterate, because he who is a gentleman in blood and fibre can never be anything else.

Mr. Bernie had not more than started his preparations for tea when the little Hardy girls entered, each carrying a present. The older handed Mr. Bernie a piece of meat, and in perfect English said, "Father sends his

compliments and asks you to accept this piece of moose venison"; and the younger one, speaking equally good English, handed him a birch bark rogan full of berries, saying, "Mother sends her compliments and asks you to accept these raspberries from her and ourselves."

It is no fiction to say that the tea at the Mission was a very pleasant affair, and that it was so mainly because the host and his visitors felt drawn towards each other from the very start, and that their company manners and those of every day were identical.

It seemed almost incredible that the lady sitting at his table, expressing herself in better English than that of the average woman in England, was a pure-blooded Indian woman—a Nahanni who had received her education in the bush and whose only teacher was her husband. Allow that she may have been exceptionally intelligent for a native, she was a striking example of what may be done with the natives if their improvement is undertaken in earnest. To put it bluntly, here was an example of a squaw converted into a lady through the enterprise of an Englishman. And you are not asked to approve the method or to go and do likewise; but only to "rouse to some work of high and holy love," throwing into "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do" the same degree of heart and soul.

Mrs. Hardy had a glorious crop of hair, which she kept neatly braided according to the male and female ideas prevailing in her generation. She was well-formed, well-featured, and her words, her countenance and voice showed a right interest in what was going on around her, and as the observant missionary looked approvingly on

Mr. and Mrs. Hardy and their two charming little daughters, he said to himself, "The alliance between the English and the Nahanni having worked out well so far, I can see no reason why, given a similar chance, it should not do so to the end."

When Mr. Bernie looked at the little girls sitting at his table he could not disassociate his mind from the thought of their being wood-nymphs. They both favoured their father in the golden colour of their hair; but the older, named Erma, had her mother's features, and divided evenly between her parents as regards complexion; the younger one, however, named Winnie, favoured her father to a really comical extent, not even so much as overlooking his springy movements.

After tea Mr. Bernie produced a large book on natural history in which were many beautifully coloured prints. With the aid of this book, an album, a microscope and a few copies of the Illustrated London News, six months old, a pleasant and profitable hour was spent, after which they all joined in singing several well-known English songs, for which Mr. Bernie played the accompaniment on his violin. After this there followed family prayers, and then in the midst of movements to leave, it was arranged that Mr. Hardy should remain behind for a little while.

The good-nights between the ladies and Mr. Bernie were thoroughly civilized. Mrs. Hardy, holding out her hand said, Good-night Mr. Bernie, and thank you for a very pleasant evening." Erma said, "Good-night, sir, and thank you for such a good time." When it came to Winnie's turn she gave her father an enquiring look

which he seemed to understand, for he said, "Yes, my child, perhaps Mr. Bernie would not mind if you said good-night to him in the same way you say it to me." And immediately the sweet unsophisticated little maiden smiled and raised her face towards the missionary, who caught her up and clasped her to his bosom, and then she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him good-night.

When the three had passed through the door and Mr. Bernie had closed it behind them, he turned to Mr. Hardy and said, "Now then, tell me this please. How did you do it?" And that gentleman replied, "We have been quietly rehearsing in the bush for several years and you have just seen something of the results."

Mr. Bernie then informed his visitor of how he had come to hear about him when spending a winter at Fort Simpson some years before. "And now," said he, "you can hardly do anything that will give me so much pleasure as to tell me the wonderful story of how you have come through so splendidly."

Mr. Hardy replied, "Before giving you an outline of my actions after my visit to Fort Liard, I may state that the said visit occurred after I had been five years in the country. I left England shortly after the death of both my parents, who died within a few months of each other. As I was their only son I felt their death very keenly, and meeting with a disappointment in love about the same time, I decided to leave the country. Briefly, this was the disappointment to which I have referred:

"A Miss Lily Blackburn and I had grown up together from early childhood. We had played together, walked

together, studied together, and it was the wish of Miss Blackburn's parents and my own that we should some day marry. For my part I was perfectly willing and perhaps took it too much for granted that Miss Blackburn was equally willing.

"About the time of my mother's death, a young gentleman of the neighbourhood, a Mr. Kent, who had lately fallen heir to an estate supposed to be of considerable value, began to pay marked attention to Miss Blackburn, so I decided to speed matters up without incurring the risk of actual rejection, and then I very soon had unmistaken signs that Mr. Kent was the favoured suitor. In disgust I hurriedly settled my affairs in England, and leaving £5,000 securely invested there, I came over to Canada, arriving in Winnipeg with very little money, for I was determined to eschew two things—extravagance and idleness. Since the day I left England I have had no communication with anyone there; nevertheless, while I have studiously secluded myself in the 'Great Lone Land,' I have just as studiously avoided turning either recluse or misanthrope, and no sooner have I arrived at my future and permanent location in the North-West, I shall once more utilize the post office and get into communication with my friends.

"For over a year after reaching Canada I worked with a survey party west of the Rockies. After that I joined two Canadians who had been mining on the Fraser River, and who intended to trap and do a little trading with the Sikannis during winter. For three years we were in frequent contact with these Indians, and we got to speak their language pretty well. Then on our third

annual visit to the coast we dissolved partnership. My friends went to Dawson, and I hired three Indians to help me return with a small trading outfit to the country of the Sikannis. According to arrangement the three Indians wintered with me, and we met with good success. In the spring I sent them back to Victoria with furs and gold dust, and a letter to a certain merchant there, informing him of the consignment, an arrangement having been previously made with him to pay the Indians on their return any balance accruing to them, and after deducting his commission, to deposit the balance, if any, in a certain bank, to my credit. As I can fully trust the Indians and the merchant, and Canadian banks are said to be reliable, I am confident that the said balance, with interest added, stands to my credit in the bank today, although I have never heard one word, either from the Indians or the merchant.

"This brings me to that period in my history of which you heard from the Company's aged officer, whose acquaintance I made at Fort Liard after I had crossed the Rocky Mountains. With respect to that lone crossing, I would say that one such performance is enough for me. It is doubtful if I would ever have got through, had I not had a map made for me by an intelligent Sikanni, showing the route to the crest of the Rockies, beyond which his own knowledge did not extend. When finally I did get through after three weeks of nerve-trying experience, I felt such a longing to behold a human being, that when I saw an old Indian standing on the bank of the Liard, although his once snow-white cap and leggings had become very dirty, I could almost have embraced him; as it was, when I approached him with the usual Beaver

salutation—'*Ni-la-oo-shoo-di*' (give me your hand), I unconsciously squeezed it with a fervour that made him wince.

"I shall now pick up the thread of my narrative at that point where I was correctly reported to have been seen by an Indian after leaving Fort Liard. After exchanging compliments and good advice with this friendly Indian and his family, I continued to ascend the Nahanni River. Sometimes I ascended tributaries, and on reaching the limit of navigation for a dug-out, I would either turn back at once or tie up my dug-out and hunt or prospect afoot. Thus passed the regular summer and also an ideal Indian summer. Strange to say, after the one instance already mentioned, I saw no more Indians till late in autumn, although several times I came across camps which had not long been vacated.

"When the weather began to turn cool, I decided that as the Indians had not found me, I had better set to work and find them, so as to learn what their attitude towards me was going to be, as I intended, if it could be arranged, to hunt in company with some Indians during the winter. The quick and easy manner of my finding a camp after deciding to look for one furnished me one of the experiences in my life which keeps alive the beautiful idea of heavenly aid vouchsafed instrumentally through a guardian angel.

"No one was home in the camp I found; but there was cached away on a stage—that spider-like storehouse of the Indians—the traps, snowshoes, and sundries which they to whom they belonged would be very soon coming after. So I decided that here, or close to here, I would

spend the winter unless the owner of this cache turned out to be too objectionable. Instead of that, however, he turned out to be one of the finest Indians I had ever met. He was a Nahanni and his name was *Too-nih-ke.* He had been to Fort Liard for his winter supplies, and the camp where we met was to be his camp for the winter. I had by this time killed two fat moose and their meat was hanging from a stage near his cache, and to partly ingratiate myself with him and at the same time find out the nature of his soul, I pointed to the stage and said, 'My brother, I expect that meat was taken on your hunting ground, so I turn it over to you. It is yours.' His reply showed that I had made the acquaintance of one of nature's noblemen. He said, 'My White brother must be a great hunter and must have a good heart; but Toonihke can hunt a little, too, and he is not mean. *Na-gha Tgha* (our Father) has given us this meat. Let his children share it alike. Let my White brother keep one for himself and I shall be very pleased to have the other one for my wife and children.'

"When later I told Toonihke what I would like for the winter he fell in readily with my wishes and it was arranged that I would help in keeping the family in venison, and that in return they would keep me in snowshoes and moccasins. As to trapping, he would let me have half of what was regarded as his hunting grounds and each would own his own catch.

"I don't expect ever to have a happier time than that first winter I spent with Toonihke and his family. He had five children. The eldest was a young woman named *Sun,* the Beaver for star. The others were much younger. When I remarked upon this I was informed that Sun was

a child by a first wife, who had died when she was two years of age. I had my own tent but spent most of my evenings with my partner and his family. I taught them games and puzzles, also songs and hymns, using the English words and teaching their meaning. Seemingly, without intent on their part or mine, I found myself gradually becoming their chaplain or missionary. In all my travels I have carried this pocket compass with me." (Here Mr. Hardy took from his pocket a strongly bound little book, and handed it to Mr. Bernie, who read aloud its title—"The Book of Common Prayer.") "That," continued Mr. Hardy, "was a present from my mother, and it has been a valuable pocket compass to me, and, I believe, to others also. Every evening before leaving Toonihke's lodge for my own, we sang a hymn together, then I read a portion of Scripture from the Prayer Book and explained its meaning in Nahanni, after which we knelt and repeated together two or three collects and the Lord's Prayer.

"When I had been about four months the companion of these simple children of the forest, I gradually became conscious that I was entertaining sentiments towards Miss Sun Toonihke which a vigorous young man is very liable to feel towards a beautiful and sprightly maiden."

"Ah!" interjected the missionary. "*Sun*stroke, no doubt."

"Yes, sir," laughed Mr. Hardy. "It struck me so at the time; but I did not wilt, and have not done so yet, although the rays of that self-same sun have been focused upon me for the past ten years. Mr. Bernie, you no doubt understand Indians as well as I do, although you

have not come in quite such close contact with them as I have."

"Not quite," said the parson.

"Quite so," said the other, whereupon they both laughed in perfect understanding and good nature.

"What I wanted to say was this," Mr. Hardy continued, "that there is as much variety among Indians as there is among Whites, a fact of which we soon become aware once we begin to examine the qualities of mind and heart which lie beneath the surface. And after my experience with the Indians, I was satisfied that the Toonihke family possessed the moral qualities which are esteemed by people of every shade and colour, and that in Miss Toonihke God had made a woman good enough for any man, and at any rate, one that suited me very well. She was at that time a sprightly maiden of eighteen, attractive in appearance and beloved in her home; but what impressed me as her most beautiful characteristic was her consideration for her father's comfort.

"Before making any advance towards her with a view to marriage, I gave the matter long and serious consideration, and while not shifting one iota from my former opinion, to which I still adhere—that intermarriages between White and Red races should not be encouraged, I felt that under the circumstances there was going to be an exception in the case of 'Dan and Sun.'"

"Quite so, quite so," laughingly spoke the missionary.

"I therefore decided," resumed Mr. Hardy, "to give the prospective firm of Dan and Sun an opportunity to eventuate by allowing the objection of racial disparity to go by the board.

"After I had thought out this question I invited Toonihke to my lodge, and after he had drunk two cups of well-sweetened tea and had his pipe going nicely, I informed him that I desired to make Sun my wife. In the course of his sensible answer he paid me as high a compliment as I have ever had. He said, 'My son, the worst harm that has come to the Indians through the Whites, has been due to the too great readiness of silly Indian women to accept the attentions of bad White men; but I am sure your heart is like my daughter's—white, although your hair and skin are not the same colour as hers. You only call yourself an *A-ka-yas* (Englishman), but from what I have seen of you, I am sure you are a *Ma-o-ti na-chai oochu* (a good big-master), and I know you would be kind to my daughter; but, of course, I can give her to you only after I find out whether she is willing to have you. In this country it is the man who runs after the woman and not the other way.'

"I told him I was very much pleased, and that in my country also we worked it out that way; but that sometimes a woman found it necessary to work it out the *other* way.

"I presume Toonihke gave his family a hint of what had happened when we had been drinking tea and smoking together, for Sun looked rather excited when I next called at the tent, and contrived to keep me waiting two or three days before giving me a chance to speak to

her alone. She informed me then that next day she was going after raspberries with one of her sisters, and I proposed that she should take me instead of the little sister, and she gave me an understanding look and said it would be all right if her father and mother were willing.

"I smiled and said, 'If it looks fine in the morning I'll come over for you and we shall put in a nice day together on the beautiful prairie with the two hills.'

"Next morning she was waiting for me when I called, and was evidently looking forward to the day's outing with pleasure. A walk of thirty minutes brought us to the beautiful prairie, where in an aspen grove through which fire had passed a few years before, we found raspberries by the bushel, and in about an hour's time our birch bark rogans were full. We then went to a little stream from whose sweet, sparkling waters we slaked our thirst, after which we sat down in the shade and ate our lunch of moose tongue and choice dried venison. Then I had to answer a great many questions about the doings of the wonderful *A-ka-ya-si-wok* (English people). We then had another drink from the stream, after which we took off our moccasins and waded about in the water, laughing like two happy children.

"After we had put on our moccasins and were seated on a fallen tree beside our berries, I told Sun of how I had grown to love her, and wished to make her my wife, that is, if she loved me enough to be willing to accept me as her husband.

"Looking into my face with an expression which clearly showed both gladness and surprise, she said,

'Sin-ih-ti-ke, nwas-tyeh, o-tyeh nwas-tyeh (I am pleased. I love you very much; but I can hardly believe even now that I am not going to lose you, for often when I have thought that some day you would be sure to go away and never come back again, I have gone away alone and cried.')

"I thought it as well to give matters a humorous turn, and asked her if it was my red hair that she liked, when she answered with the counter-query, 'Is it my red skin that you like?' We both laughed and rose to our feet. Then she said, running and dancing backwards as she spoke, 'If the man with the red hair wants the woman with the red skin for *ma-tsi-yu-a* (his wife), let him catch her first,' and she turned and ran towards the nearest woods, with me following in hot pursuit. When I reached the spot where she had entered the woods she was nowhere in sight; but when I whistled in imitation of a marmot, an answering whistle from near by immediately followed, and glancing in the direction from whence it came, I beheld my beautiful nymph of the forest looking at me through an opening in the foliage and laughing at me. Then I decided to catch her with guile. Starting in pursuit I pretended to stumble, and coming to earth, I gave forth a loud and dismal moan; and in an instant she was bending over me in a state of great concern; and in that self-same instant I caught her by the hand, and springing to my feet I said, 'This is how the man with the red hair catches the woman with the red skin. Now then are you going to be my wife? She gave me a sly look and whispered, 'A-ha,' yes, and as we gave the betrothal kiss, it seemed as if the spirits of our mothers were present, for I thought of mine and the little prayer-book, and at the same instant Sun said, 'I cannot

tell this to my own mother; but I would like to tell my father. Let us go home.'

"When we returned to camp I explained in the presence of the whole family that while Sun and I were man and wife according to Nahanni usage, I intended as soon as the opportunity offered to have our union sanctioned by the Church. Then we had our wedding feast under the open skies, on a carpet of fresh-cut prairie grass and flowers, and from a small supply of sugar which I had hoarded away I contributed sufficient for our tea and raspberries. Then when the wedding feast was over and the stars were twinkling in friendly compliment to our star, we dispersed: the children went off to bed, Sun entered the family lodge with her mother, and presently came out again with a leather bag which contained about all her worldly possessions. As became an Englishman, I took the bag, and we walked over to my lodge in civilized style—arm in arm. Arriving there I raised the flap and invited her to enter, and when she had done so, I did likewise—then the curtain dropped.

"I had met many of the Nahanni by this time and found that because of my medicine they were not averse to having me in the country; but I learnt from Toonihke that they were encouraging a suspicion without, of my having come to grief, and I doubted not that they were doing this as a deterrent to further encroachments on their country. After my union with Sun I decided that it would do no harm to stay close to them until I left the country for good, getting my supplies meanwhile through my father-in-law.

"I never intended to stay as long as ten years; but I grew fond of the Indians and their easy manner of living; besides I was doing the Indians some good, and there was also no mean satisfaction in educating my wife and children for a civilized life. Over a year ago Sun's father died, and after the days of mourning were over we took our departure. I have obliged my Nahanni friends by coming out very quietly. Our route was down the Nahanni and Liard Rivers, up the MacKenzie, along the west end of Great Slave Lake, up the Hay River and overland to Fort St. John's, then down-stream to here.

"Before continuing down-stream to Fort Chipewyan and so onward to some point which I have in mind, I wish you to do me the favour of baptizing my wife and children, and Sun and I also desire to be united in the bonds of Holy Matrimony according to the rites of the Church of England and the laws of the Dominion of Canada."

In the afternoon of the next day the wishes of Mr. and Mrs. Hardy were carried out in the church in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Findlay and Mr. and Mrs. Kidd, after which the missionary and his visitors were invited to the Findlay's for tea. They did not seem to suspect who Mr. Hardy was, having perhaps heard and thought little about the lone miner who had called at Fort Liard years after they were there. In the course of conversation Mr. Hardy admitted having lived among the Sikannis, and naturally it would be inferred that Mrs. Hardy was of that branch of the Beaver stock. Mrs. Findlay complimented her and the children on their good English, and Mrs. Hardy smiled, and looking at her

husband said, "We had a most excellent teacher," and Mr. Hardy laughed with real pleasure and said that he had to confess to being a little proud of his work.

The lone missionary took such a liking to his visitors that he begged Mr. Hardy to stay one day longer, which he did; and before leaving he promised to write as soon as ever he had located on the spot which was to be his future home.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Actors Retire and the Curtain Drops

In the summer following the extraordinary visit just described, Mr. Findlay and Mr. Kidd were both promoted, the former to the rank of Chief Factor and the latter to that of Chief Trader. Following their promotion they moved to separate appointments in the Peace River district. About this time also there were many changes in the Mission Field, largely due to improved means of transport *via* Edmonton and Lesser Slave Lake. Among these changes was the division of the Diocese of Athabasca, according to which the Diocese retaining the name was to comprise chiefly the Peace River country.

Following these readjustments there arrived a number of new missionaries, and Mr. Bernie considered it an opportune time to treat himself to a year's furlough. Accordingly he put in a year of solid enjoyment in England and Eastern Canada, after which he returned and once more took up Indian work on the Peace River, but at a different station.

Hardly had he adjusted himself to his new surroundings when he received new and melancholy proof of the lack of physical stamina in the unfortunate Beavers. Late in autumn an epidemic of measles and whooping-cough started among them, and in the course of a few weeks one-fifth of those trading at this important post died of the forenamed complaints.

When any race becomes so run-down that it cannot put up a better fight than that against children's diseases

such as those just named, their condition might well appeal to every heart susceptible to compassion. And it must be said that the missionaries of both churches gave personal assistance to the extent of their means. There were fur-traders too, who, notwithstanding the costliness of imported food, gave out many a pound without making any charge.

It has already been told how the Canadian Government extended aid to these Indians through the agency of the Hudson's Bay Company. It is easy enough to blame both for inadequacy in the measures taken to afford relief; but if the case be dispassionately and intelligently dealt with on its merits, it will have to be conceded that the two corporations showed sympathy with the sufferers and tried to handle the situation wisely.

Unfortunately the flour shipped in from Edmonton at that time was made from wheat grown there, which often was frosted or smutty. Whatever may be said of the donors, it can certainly be said of this flour that it did not rise to the occasion. It was dark and it tasted no better than it looked. To feed such flour, and for that matter the best of flour, to people enfeebled by sickness and want, who lacked both the knowledge and means of preparing it properly, was merely to insure to them an exchange of the pangs of hunger for those of indigestion. And this is what followed—oftener than ever the poor creatures would come to the missionary and address him thus: *"Taneghaotatihch, yu saniah, se pot tati,"* (Minister give me medicine, my stomach is sick), and in those cases in which Mr. Bernie was the minister appealed to, the usual treatment was to pour down a stiff dose of essence of peppermint or something to assist the badly functioning *pot;* treatment which was invariably

acceptable, and never failed to cheer the sufferer even if it did not cure him.

In the matter of affording relief both in medicine and food Mr. Bernie got to be something of an expert. Seldom having much of the latter to spare, he studied to make it go far and deal it out in a digestible form.

After the epidemic just described about fifteen women and children were left stranded at the fort over winter, having no relative left who could provide for them. Mr. Bernie had a good supply of vegetables, also one hundred pounds of corned beef which the philanthropy of a good lady in London had enabled him to procure. With these ingredients and some flour a substantial soup was made daily and dished out steaming hot to these unfortunate creatures. It was a soup with lots of body—not much angel's food about it perhaps; but of a biting winter morning it made splendid food for the Beavers.

Nature had generously endowed the Beaver Indian country with game and fur-bearing animals and so long as these were numerous and the health of the Indians was good, there was no need, and the Beavers felt no desire to seek for an easier means of living in the cultivation of the soil; but when, owing to encroachments on their country by Indians of other tribes and by Whites as well, the returns from trapping and hunting dwindled down to about twenty-five per cent of what it had been, and the fitness of the Indians to live by the chase dropped down correspondingly, then very naturally they bethought themselves of the productiveness of their soil, which was demonstrated before their eyes by the Company's trading posts and the Missions, in the vegetables annually grown. And a few of them did

actually go in for gardening, thus supplementing the products of the chase with those of the soil, and giving themselves an extra chance to hang on to life a little longer. And so it was that here and there might be seen a small potato patch which these die-hard Beavers had turned up with spade and hoe, and when they came in from their hunts in autumn, there was, according to their communistic principles, a great feast of *ya-che-si* (potatoes), for everybody. Usually, however, enough was put away in small pits to provide seed and another feast in the following year.

However trying the conditions under which Mr. Bernie carried on his work as a missionary, he regarded it as the greatest calling on earth, and one which does not debar men and women from the highest sort of adventure and social pleasure.

At this last appointment he was still within reach of his dear friends, the Findlays; the Kidds also were by no means inaccessible, while the officer in charge of the post beside which the Mission stood, was a friendly neighbour, as was also his clerk and several of the other employees. Then among his fellow-missionaries, two or three were near enough to admit of an exchange of visits about once in six months. He also had the pleasure of several times meeting Mr. Winters, whose acquaintance he had made thirteen years before in the MacKenzie River district. His servant or assistant cook was the Tukudh, John Tindle, who was Mission servant the winter Mr. Bernie was at Fort Simpson.

John did not forget to call on Mr. Bernie, who, being a good deal of a socialist, and practical at that, asked John to help him to get tea after which they could sit down

and enjoy it together like that evening long ago when between them they had put away six large caribou steaks. As Mr. Bernie did not intend ever again to feed John at his expense, he made up his mind to do it properly on this occasion, and the latter also did his part properly, giving conclusive proof before he got through that his *wor-rums* were still alive and active.

In the course of a chat after tea the following story told by John will show that Peace River had made some impression upon him:

"Before I come to Peace River I aloos hear that there are snakes here, and very first thing when I come, Mr. Farmer he say to me, 'John, fetch the cows from up the hill and look out you don't get stung.' I think he mean snakes, sure. Well, I walk along, and when I about half way up, Wah-wha! just as if something go through my feet. I jump one side. Wah-wha! Um stung on the other foot! I sit down. Now indeed, that time um stung right there where I sit. I not know what to do, but I turn the way it don't hurt and pull off my moccasins and see them things what hurt sticking all over; and now I see green things (cacti) on the ground what looks just like frogs. After that I pull some sharp things out of my pants. When I get back with the cows and tell Mr. Farmer about it, he laugh till he nearly choke. Then he tell me, 'Them is *Crapeaud Vert*: never sit on them things, John,' and I tell him, 'Not if I know it. One time's 'nough for me.'"

Soon after the formation of the new Athabasca Diocese the Bishop started the rule of annually summoning his staff of workers, of whom there were at first only eight, to a conference. Among the ordained

men was a Mr. Wheatley, in charge of the neighbouring Mission to that of Mr. Bernie.

Mr. Wheatley might have been called a colonizing or agricultural missionary. In various other respects he was a remarkable man, being a splendid conversationalist, an eloquent preacher, and possessed of an extraordinary talent for illustrating every mortal thing with an anecdote. Among his other good qualities he was friendly and hospitable, so that the wayfaring man, without regard to his race or the stripe of his religion or politics, could always confidently make for the abode of Mr. Wheatley, sure of three things when he got there—an open door, a square meal, and a fetching anecdote.

Mr. Wheatley's farming operations were quite successful, and proved, beyond contradiction, that the opinion of Professor McCoun and other writers as to the rich soil and fine climate of the Peace River country, had only to be put to the test to be fully verified. He raised roots and cereals in abundance, including the two most valuable—potatoes and wheat—and he had nearly all the creatures usually found on a good farm, with the exception of sheep.

In a substantial way he strengthened and cheered pilgrims on their way through a weary world, and that must count for something.

One of his methods of dispelling the loneliness of life in the wilderness was to go about his work singing the cheerful class of hymns known in the North in his time as "Moody and Sankey"; and several of the Company's employees who were musical, carried away souvenirs of a visit to him in a knowledge of one or more of these hymns, and far and wide might afterwards be heard singing,

"Ring the Bells of Heaven," etc. The very animals on his farm would doubtless have felt queer if, for the space of twenty-four hours, they had not heard their master singing out lustily his favourite hymn, "I've Reached the Land of Corn and Wine." Before bidding good-bye to Mr. Wheatley listen to just one of his million anecdotes, forgiving as far as you can the too common tendency to find amusement in the physical defects of others, of a kind from which we ourselves do not happen to suffer. This was told to the Athabasca missionaries after the close of one of the conferences already referred to. The missionaries had enjoyed a splendid twelve o'clock dinner at Mr. Wheatley's hospitable board, when the Bishop playfully announced that, "The sons of the prophets having got through with business, they would now adjourn with their host to his field and assist in planting and fencing his potatoes." Arriving there it was found that the potatoes, pickets and fence-poles were in readiness, also a large mallet and hole-opener. The latter is a thirty-inch stake pointed like an ordinary one and having a pin or rod passing through it transversely near the top, so as to form handles. Sometimes this implement and the mallet are operated by two men, in which case the man working the hole-opener, by stretching out an arm and keeping hold of a handle, retains it in position while the other is giving the first two or three blows with the mallet.

As the missionaries stood around and each selected or was allotted his job, Mr. Wheatley told the following story:

"A farmer down in Ontario hired two men, who were strangers to each other, to put up a fence. One of them had a fierce squint and the other a fearful stutter. The

latter got hold of the hole-opener and held it in position, and then chancing to look upwards he beheld what he took to be an evil eye glaring at his head as if selecting the most vulnerable spot upon which to bring down his mallet. Horrified, he sprang to his feet and put this question to his companion, 'Da-da-da-do you ha-ha-hit wha-wha-where you l-l-look?'

" 'I do,' replied the other.

" 'Th-th-then you-can-get-some-other fa-f-f-fellow to hold the pa-p-pa-p-p-p-picket.' "

In the beginning of the winter following the forenamed conference Mr. Bernie received a letter from Mr. Kidd, inviting him on behalf of Mrs. Kidd and himself to come and spend his Christmas with them, informing him at the same time that there were some recent arrivals in the fort who were awaiting an opportunity to be admitted into the church by baptism, and among them a Kidd. "Come and go," he wrote, "on dates convenient to yourself; but if you can manage it, make the visit a lengthy one."

Mr. and Mrs. Kidd's invitation was gladly accepted, and Mr. Bernie reached them ten days before Christmas. Among those who greeted him was our old friend Mr. Godfrey, who in acknowledging Mr. Bernie's compliments as to his hearty appearance, said, "Yes, please God to spare me, I expect to enjoy a few more Christmases."

Mr. Bernie spent three weeks on this visit, and when it came to an end felt satisfied that it had been profitable and enjoyable to others as well as himself. He held two religious services each Sunday, performed four baptisms and one marriage, daily visited a few sick Indians, and

twice visited each family residing in the fort. The Kidds kept up that fine old custom of the North, of gathering in a friendly circle before that great brightener of the long wintry evenings—the old-fashioned chimney filled with blazing logs—and there they entered into each other's joys as far as mortals may, and in so doing lightened each other's cares. And always there were fond reminiscences of friends before the time came to say good-night.

Among the Company's employees met by Mr. Bernie on this visit was James Flaman, a native-born Frenchman, for a long time one of the Company's guides, who, during this particular winter, was hunting for the fort. Mr. Kidd had arranged with Mr. Flaman for a bear and beaver hunt immediately after the New Year, and as a chinook occurred just then and Flaman reported a good place to hunt less than ten miles from the fort, he decided to carry out his plan and asked his guest if he would care to be one of the party. Mr. Bernie replied, "Nothing will suit me better than a bear and beaver hunt. I'm with you." Mr. Godfrey also accepted this opportunity for sport and formed one of the party of four. Flaman's dog-train was requisitioned, and the others of the party were on saddle, as the chinook had warmed up the air and reduced the snow to a depth of only two inches. They reached Flaman's tent at noon and found it in charge of his wife. Mrs. Flaman was no beauty and she had borne her lord no children; but apparently these things did not trouble her, and she laughed heartily at very little, and the little could be depended on in Mr. Godfrey's talk, so that Mr. Bernie and Mr. Kidd got some of their sport with very little trouble. Added to the other accomplishments, Mrs. Flaman could smoke and hunt alongside of any man, and

best of all, she was cleanly and an excellent cook; and it was a delight to the hunters on entering the tent to inhale the scent of the newly laid carpet of fresh spruce brush, upon which she very soon set before them a meal which was pleasant to the eyes and more so to the taste.

After lunch the hunters repaired to the beaver lodge with axes, traps and an ice chisel. Arriving there, Flaman first of all located a number of hollow spots on the banks of the little stream in which the lodge was built. This he did by sounding with a stout pole cut square on the large end. These hollow places represented the passages used by the beavers in going to and fro between the lodge and their other quarters or places of refuge in the banks. Over each of the passages discovered a hole was quickly cut large enough to admit of the setting of a trap, after which it was closed with sticks, brush and snow to exclude cold and light. A hole was then cut into the lodge, after which they retired to camp until evening, and on returning then, they took three beavers from their five traps. The traps were not put back, but instead the holes were securely closed, and the remainder of the colony left to breed in peace for at least one year, after which another raid would be in order.

That evening after tea, Flaman, after some coaxing, gave an account of his travels since leaving the Red River on his first trip to York Factory up to the present, when he had become one of the semi-wandering inhabitants of the Peace River. It was a treat to hear; and Godfrey remarked that it was just like a book, and Mrs. Flaman laughed, and Kidd remarked that it was easier on the eyes, and she laughed again. Early next day the hunters started out on the bear hunt under the direction of

Flaman, who took his dogs to assist. In a short time they were heard barking fiercely, and on investigation it was found that they had chased a lynx up a balsam tree. There the ungainly creature stood on one of the large lower branches, glaring at the barking dogs underneath as if selecting the one into whose ribs it would bury its claws. Perhaps it was because the face of the lynx caused one of the hunters to speak of a pussy he had known long ago, that this particular member of the feline tribe had to be placed at the disposal of Flaman, who, having no recollections of house-cats or their friends, cheerfully brought down the lynx with a pellet of buck-shot.

The march after bears was then resumed, and the hunters had not gone much farther when the dogs were barking again, and as they approached the place, Flaman, who was slightly in advance, stopped, and putting his hand to his nose exclaimed, "Pwai!" (the Cree expression of disgust over a foul smell). On a nearer approach it was found that the dogs had turned out three skunks from their nest, hence the unpleasantness. Mr. Kidd, Mr. Bernie and Flaman at once relinquished their interests in the find in favour of Mr. Godfrey, who said, "All right, gentlemen, I'm not afraid of the smell, for there is no finer cure for a cold, and a little of their oil will be just the thing to knock the rheumatism out of my elbow." He then proceeded to shoot the skunks, which he succeeded in doing without hitting the dogs. In order to carry them without getting scented, he tied them together at the neck, and suspending them on a ten-foot pole, he then placed one end on his shoulder and was proceeding to trail the other end behind *travois* fashion,

when Mr. Kidd offered to take one end, being careful to stipulate, however, that he be given the windward end.

The dogs were not very keen on the scent after this, possibly being unable to smell anything besides themselves. Early in the afternoon Flaman drew the attention of his companions to a mound near the roots of a fallen tree. On examination it was found to be a bear's den and occupied by a bear at that. Mr. Bernie, who was to do the killing, took up a suitable position, while Flaman woke up the bear by thrusting a pole into its den; and when poor bruin quietly put out his head to see what was the trouble, Mr. Bernie pulled the trigger and his gun went off—so did the bear, into that profound sleep from which there is no awakening—for bears.

Flaman immediately went after his toboggan, and while he was doing so, Mr. Kidd and Mr. Godfrey skinned and quartered the bear in readiness for his return. By the time they got back to camp, night was coming on, and they were very hungry, having eaten nothing since morning.

Mrs. Flaman was ready for them. She had prepared several dishes, any of which was delicious to a real northerner. There was Red River bannock, roast beaver, beaver tail and moose nose boiled. On the side there was fat, dried moose; and for dessert, dried saskatoon berries and marrow grease. All were well prepared and placed on a beautifully clean cloth.

When Mrs. Flaman had washed the dishes and set them aside, she produced her fire-bag (tobacco pouch) and handed it round to her guests to help themselves to kinikinik to mix in with their tobacco. Then when all the pipes were going, including her own, as the gentlemen

reclined on their partly unrolled bedding with their legs stretched towards the fire, there came over the faces of all a look of unspeakable comfort. Then Mr. Bernie, being in the best position to speak, as he had no pipe between his teeth, complimented Mrs. Flaman on her good cooking, asking her how she got the saskatoons so sweet, and the grease so white.

She explained that she was careful to gather only berries which grew on short bushes well exposed to the sun; that she was very particular about drying them quickly, and immediately putting them away in tightly closed birch bark rogans. The grease, she said, was taken from the bones of the moose, which were first crushed and then put through a process of boiling and straining, after which the grease was placed in bladders.

"No wonder they are both so delicious," said Mr. Bernie. "Now suppose you tell us something about your hunting. Tell us of the best shot you have made."

"When she brought Jim to his knees," said Mr. Kidd.

"Well, then, the next best let it be."

Mrs. Flaman then told the following story:

"Ten years ago, my old man here and I hunted and trapped along the Loon River. One day I was visiting my string of snares and traps, and when I was having my lunch before turning homewards, a beautiful white owl came and lit on one of the trees nearby, and as I was in the act of raising my gun to shoot it, I heard the sound of small animals running towards me along the path I had just been following. Looking in that direction I saw a rabbit approaching at full speed, with a martin close behind in full pursuit. I took aim at the martin just as

it seized the rabbit from behind; and at the same moment the owl seized the rabbit by the head. Then I pulled the trigger and the three of them lay kicking on the snow."

Everyone complimented her on her fine marksmanship, and Mr. Bernie remarked that she had shown a fine sense of justice in aiming at the aggressive martin. She laughed and confessed that all she was thinking about was that its skin would fetch *nis-too-wah-tai* (three M. B.).

Just then Mr. Godfrey rose to a sitting position, crossed his legs, stroked his beard and cleared his throat and said, "I have done a little mixed shooting, too."

"All right," said Kidd. "Get it off your mind." The others expressing a wish to hear about it, Godfrey again cleared his throat and started in:

"I don't care to tell this story to strangers because they are sure to think that I am drawing the long bow; but you all know me and I don't mind telling it here." (Laughter.)

"This happened twenty years ago at one of the marshes of Lake Winnipeg. I had walked down from my tent to the marshes one evening to get a shot at ducks, and had hardly taken up a position in a point of reeds when a flock of six teals came along and lit near the shore just at the outer end of a large pole lying partly on land and partly in the water. First one and then another climbed on to the pole. Presently a prairie chicken came along for a drink and also stood on the pole. All this time a rabbit was approaching the pole, stopping to nibble at a weed after every few lopes. When it was in line it stopped on hearing me give a low whistle and just then a

muskrat which I had been watching right along, also got in line. Then I let fly."

"And what happened?" asked Mr. Bernie; and first one and then another made a guess.

"All wrong," said Mr. Godfrey. "I killed ten things." "How could that be?" he was asked, and he replied, "Well, you see, it would appear that there was a pike beyond the muskrat and I got him, too."

"Yow! ai-wa-kih-kin! wonderful!" said Mrs. Flaman, as she went off into a regular fit of laughter.

Next morning before the hunters started on their return to the fort, Mr. Godfrey skilfully contrived a sort of extension to his saddle so that the skunks which were wrapped up in some old sacks could ride behind him and at the same time be far enough not to taint his clothes. The idea was all right had the cayuse been agreeable; but it was not, and no sooner had the party started than it started to buck with might and main, sending Mr. Godfrey flying over its head, and, continuing its exertions till it got the skunks to where it could reach them with its heels, it sent them flying also. When Godfrey gathered himself up and found that no bones were broken he was so pleased that he was able to see the joke and joined in the laughter to which the others had given way.

The difficulty over the skunks was surmounted by Mr. Kidd arranging with Flaman to fetch them in with the other animals, taking necessary precautions to prevent the contamination of the others.

Shortly after this visit to the Kidds, Mr. Bernie began to feel that the North was changing. The old order of things was passing away; and there were changes that

meant more than that to him—there was the departure going on of old friends for more congenial centres in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and elsewhere. Then there was going on, at an ever increasing rate, the departure from the land of the living of the members of the tribe for whose benefit he had been labouring, and, weary of witnessing what he was so powerless to prevent, he at length turned his face southward and departed from the North as his friends the Findlays, the Kidds, the Churchills and the Thomsons had done years before.

Dan Hardy had kept his promise and had written to Mr. Bernie informing him of the place in the North-West where he had homesteaded. So when Mr. Bernie decided to retire and make his home for a time at least in Manitoba, he laid out his route southward so that Mr. Hardy's would be one of the places where he would stop off for a while.

He found him living in a comfortable home in one of the many picturesque spots of the Qu'Appelle Valley. He was met at the front entrance by Mr. Hardy himself, who gave him a most hearty welcome. A minute after they had entered the sitting-room they were joined by a lady whom Mr. Bernie with difficulty recognized as Mrs. Hardy. Her form showed to better advantage in the better cut of her garments; and her hair—that glory of a woman—was put up in one of the many fetching styles which become womankind; but best of all there had been an inward adorning which had kept pace with the outward. There could be no question about it—this woman taken from an Indian lodge had become an educated lady.

This meeting was very pleasant to Mr. Bernie coming fresh from his lone quarters in the North. Indeed it was

pleasant to them all, for it is pleasant when those meet together who desire and are perfectly confident of a secure place in each other's affection and esteem. Having this confidence, Mr. Bernie readily accepted the invitation of the Hardys to be their guest for at least a few days.

It was early afternoon, and Mr. Hardy informed Mrs. Hardy that he would like Mr. Bernie to meet Mr. and Mrs. Kent; so it was arranged that these friends should be invited for tea the following day.

When Mrs. Hardy had left the room, Mr. Bernie asked Mr. Hardy if the Kents who were his neighbours were English or Canadian.

"In answering that question," said Mr. Hardy, "I shall at the same time give you the last instalment of the history of my life.

"When I arrived here from the North and located on this section, I homesteaded one quarter and pre-empted another; and a few days afterwards I found that someone else was taking possession of the other half, and the party turned out to be no other than my old rival, Mr. Kent of England. On making this discovery I felt very much like pulling up stakes and leaving, and the only consideration that prevented my doing so was the thought that what was to me an unpleasant coincidence might in reality be a gracious providence. In the hope that it might turn out so, I held on to my land, and never have had any occasion to regret having done so. The relations between our families have been of an ideal character, and early next year these will be strengthened by the marriage of our daughter Erma, to Fred, the eldest son of the Kents. I may say that the Kents had been married for some years before they had any children. The unfeigned

love between the English lady, Lily Blackburn and the Indian lady, Sun, or Star—as you will—is something beautiful to see because of its simplicity and sincerity. And it has been to me an abiding cause for wonder and gratitude. The companionship of Mrs. Kent has been of great advantage to Mrs. Hardy, for while the latter acquired a practical education with my assistance, she needed the finishing touches which enable a woman to act becomingly and with confidence in the society of others, and that is something which cannot be acquired except in the companionship of ladies.

"Squire Kent met with severe financial losses in England, and came to this country to retrieve his fortunes, which, to some extent, he has succeeded in doing; and there is no more useful and highly respected couple in this community than Mr. and Mrs. Kent. They are aware that you and Mrs. Hardy are the only two who have been taken into confidence respecting my relations with them in England, and they will therefore look forward to the opportunity of meeting you with no little interest."

"After what you have told me," said Mr. Bernie, "I shall be no less interested in meeting them."

Just then two beautiful young ladies entered arm in arm, and Mr. Hardy asked Mr. Bernie if he could remember having met them before, and he promptly answered, "I do," and shaking hands with the darker of the two he said, "This is the older sister, Miss Erma, who takes after her mother"; and shaking hands with the other, he said, "This is Miss Winnie, who favours her father and who, years ago, gave me a very nice kiss." Then the dear thing smiled and blushed, and looking at

her father she asked, "Dad, would it be right for me to repeat that performance now?" And that gentleman, thus appealed to, laughed and said, "I leave that to Mr. Bernie and yourself." Thus encouraged, they embraced and as the missionary received the lingering kiss of this beautiful maiden, he felt deeply touched and whispered, "God bless you my child."

When Mr. Bernie made the acquaintance of the Kents, he felt that they were deserving of the nice things that Mr. Hardy had said about them.

Both Mr. Hardy and Mr. Kent were lay readers, and had taken a leading part in the erection of a beautiful church. In connection with this church, Sunday School work was carried on with marked success, largely due to the hearty co-operation of the two families.

For some years longer Mr. Bernie was actively engaged in the work of his calling as pastor of a congregation in a small town, and while he made many true friends in the course of his work as Parish Priest, his old friends of the North were never ousted from the secure place they held in his affection, so that when finally he selected a place where, among congenial surroundings, he might spend the evening of his life, he saw to it that his dear friends the Findlays and others of the North, both lay and cleric, were easy of access from his abode.

In the charming home of the Findlays was a fine reminder of the North in the form of a real old-fashioned chimney, beside and around whose cheering glow the friends were wont to assemble of a long wintry evening; then, when the pipes of friendship were going nicely and sending up their fragrant columns, the last news about

old friends, or the scenes of their old labours, would be discussed. And sometimes fresh anecdotes would be told, or perhaps some of the old ones, possibly improved with age, would be told again. And always before they parted, Mrs. Findlay brought in on a tray *just one glass each* of real Hudson's Bay stuff, in which they drank "good luck to you." Then they sang together the "Days of Auld Lang Syne," with thoughts sacred to the memory of the times and places where they had met in the "Far and Furry North."

THE END

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